

SIXTEEN
SERMONS,

All (except One) Preach'd before the

University of *Oxford*,

At St. *MARY*'s,

UPON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

By *WILLIAM TILLY*, D.D.
Fellow of *C.C.C. Oxon*, and Rector
of *Albury* near *Rycot* in *Oxford-*
shire.

LONDON:

Printed for *Bernard Lintott* Bookseller, at the
Sign of the *Cross-Keys*, between the Two
Temple Gates in *Fleetstreet*. 1712.

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By WILLIAM TILLY, D.D.
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The Dedication.
Not but that Your LORDSHIP
did me the Honour to entitle Your
Self **THE RIGHT HONOURABLE**
MONTAGUE,

Earl of Abingdon,

Baron NORREYS of Rycot,
Lord Chief Justice, and Justice
in Eyre of all Her MAJESTY'S
Forests, on the South-Side of
Trent, and One of the Lords of
Her MAJESTY'S most Honourable
Privy-Council.

MY LORD,

I Hope You will be pleas'd to re-
ceive these Papers, as an In-
stance of my Duty, and grateful
Acknowledgments to Your LORD-
SHIP; though I could not have
presum'd to have offer'd them to
Your Acceptance on any other
Reason.

The Dedication.

Not, but that Your LORDSHIP did me the Honour to entitle Your Self, in a great measure, to the former part of these Discourses; when, besides all the other Instances of the greatest Favours shewn to their Author, You condescended, some Years since, to undertake the Publick Defence of their Innocence and Integrity, in the Presence of some Men, from whom, My LORD, an *Honest Man*, and *Good Principles*, must expect no Favour: These Things are so little like what these Men are, or have themselves: Yet Your LORDSHIP ventur'd, even then, in the most Evil and Dangerous Times, whilst *these Men* were *Flourishing*, and the *Nation Sinking*, to stand up in Vindication of *Honest Principles*, even under the Weakness, with which they are *here deliver'd*; and not only so, but to take a Person that Preach'd them into Your more immediate *Patronage*, and not long after to Prefer him,

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him, when many of his own Friends were ready to look upon his *Interest* as Desperate as his Enemies could Wish, his *Person* most Imprudent, and his *Zeal* Unseasonable.

I know, My LORD, Your Honour towards Almighty God and Religion to be Truly Great; and that when ever there is occasion for it, You will not fail to express Your Favour, and contribute Your Assistance to the meanest of his Servants, that, under the Sacred Badge of his *Profession*, and in pursuance of his *Holy Office*, comes to suffer from the Malice and Slanders of a *Persecuting Interest*. Yet none of these Favours must I have expected from Your LORDSHIP, if I had been the Person these ill Men had endeavoured to represent me. But Your LORDSHIP was pleas'd to think *otherwise* of me; that I had no ill Designs, nor bad Principles, at the Bottom: Nothing but a

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Heart

The Dedication.

Heart full of Duty to my Gracious
Sovereign the QUEEN, of Love
to our Excellent Church and Consti-
tution, and of a just Sorrow and In-
dignation at the Flourishing and
Success of ill Men, and worse De-
signs.

These, My LORD, are such Fa-
vours, that I dare appeal to all the
World, whether they are not suffi-
cient to engage not only the utmost
Duty, but even the Love and Af-
fection (pardon me, my LORD, that
I use such Levelling Expressions) of
any Chaplain towards so Excellent
a LORD and PATRON. And may
all the World be Witnesses against
me, and rise to Condemn me, if
ever I fail in any Instance of Dutiful
Respect to Your LORDSHIP, or My
most Honour'd LADY, From whom
I have receiv'd, so frequently, such
Condescensions of Her Goodness to-
wards me, that if I should endea-
vour to express my Sense of, and
Acknowledgments for them, I must
fall

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fall so far below what ought to be said, below my own Obligations and Desires, as to run the Venture of being thought a Man without Apprehension, or without Gratitude. How much farther still must the Just Character of Her *LADYSHIP'S* Personal Excellencies rise above any Thing 'tis possible for me to represent!

I will only presume to say One Thing, My *LORD*, in General, that I am sure 'tis impossible any Person of *Quality in England*, though even of Your *LORDSHIP'S* Admirable Goodness and Sweetness of Nature, should ever treat his *Lady* so well, with that Great Tenderness, Regard, and Honour, which Your *LORDSHIP* never fails to Express towards the *Countess of Abingdon*, if She had not those Truly Amiable Graces and Accomplishments in Her Person and Temper, which might deservedly engage, and for ever retain the Affections of One

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of the *Wiseſt*, as well as *Beſt* of
Noblemen.

I hope, My Lord, by the advantage of ſuch an Example, in time, the ſtrict Obligations of the *Married State* may come to have ſome Reputation amongſt more Perſons of *Honour*, than they ſeem to have at preſent. I am ſure they are ſtrictly bound upon all degrees of Men, in that Condition of Life, how Great ſoever, if the Authority of *God* and *Chriſt* can prevail any thing: And one would think they ſhould be *Honourable* too, if the Great *Fountain* of *Civil Honour* could make them ſo, as recommended by the *unparallel'd* Example of the Beſt of *QUEENS*: As long as it pleas'd the Good Providence of Heaven, there ſhould be room for Her *Sacred Majeſty* to expreſs Her moſt eminent Vertue and Piety in that Instance of Religion, as She has ever done in all the reſt, ſo much to the Honour of *Almighty God*,

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God, and the true Spiritual Advantage of all Her Subjects.

And whilst Your LORDSHIP follows to bright a Precedent in Your Practice of this Great Duty, other Men's Vices and Failures herein serve the more to recommend Your Vertue, since one would almost think himself bound in Charity to believe, that, surely, the Observance of this great Instance of our Religion is attended with more Difficulty in Persons of High Quality, than in other Men: And, consequently, 'tis the more highly Excellent and Valuable, when 'tis found there. In *this*, My LORD, though Your Example be of a very large and extensive Influence, yet the more immediate advantage of it is confin'd at Home, and renders indeed Your LADY particularly Happy.

But when, in conjunction with this, we survey so many other Perfections of Grace and Nature united

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in one Person: When we consider an *Earl of England*, as answering all His relations to His God, His QUEEN, and Country, His Neighbour and Himself: When we observe His unfeign'd Faith and Piety towards *Almighty God*, His unblemish'd *Loyalty* to His *Sovereign*, His resoly'd uniform steady Love to His Church and Country's Establishment, without any design of Self-interest, or upon His own least Advancement, tho' His noble Endowments, Accomplishments and Capacity render Him, in the Eye of all the World, most truly Deserving of the *Greatest*: When we know Him to be most seriously and constantly Devout, both in publick and private, without Affectation, Just beyond Example, Kind and Generous, and Charitable further than the Needs and Desires of those that apply to His Power and Goodness do require: When we find Him truly Sociable and Compliant without

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out breaking in upon the Bounds of Temperance and Sobriety; cheerful without Trifling, without ever violating the *Guards* of Religion or Modesty; full of Submission, Courtesy and Condescension, yet never descending from His Honour. When we see Him *Wise* without *Craft*, *Strict* and *Severe* in His own Life and Practice without *Cent-suring*, *Prudent* to Observe, *Careful* to Avoid, and *Powerful* to Reprove, by His own Example, yet, in His great Candour, not willing to upbraid the Faults and Infirmities of other Men. In one Word, When we contemplate Him as perfectly Regular, most truly Delightful and Profitable in all His Conversation: These, My LORD, are Qualities and Vertues so truly Great and Worthy, that when plac'd in so Great an *Eminence*, in a Person of *Your High Character*, they descend full of Blessings upon the World, and have the most prevail-

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ing Efficacy towards the Reformation of the Age. Such I know them to be in Your *Lordship*, that almost any Man, even a Worthy *Clergy-man*, much more Your own *Chaplain*, may learn to correct and amend the Defects and Errors, and improve the Vertues of his own Life and Practice by the more perfect Pattern of Your *Lordship*'s

How much therefore I my self have to answer for in particular, if I am not made the better Man, and the better Christian by my attendance on Your *Lordship*, I am very sensible. As I am likewise of my exceeding great Happiness, in having been Plac'd by Your *Lordship*'s Favour and Bounty, and in consistence with my *University* Interests, once before, and now again, within the reach of so advantageous an Influence,

My LORD, That I take the Boldness to inscribe these unworthy

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Papers to Your Great Name, without Your Leave or Consent, while I am not sure I act against it, I would desire the affectionate Forwardness of my Duty towards Your Lordship may be my Excuse. But, I am very far, *My Lord*, from designing, by this means, to Engage Your Honour in any of my Controversies, or to Answer for any Exceptions that can be justly taken against me, for any Passage to be found within this Book. I was only desirous, for the Ease and Satisfaction of my own Mind, to take the First Opportunity (though others, perhaps, will think not the most Prudent or Respectful one) of rendring those my dutiful *Thanks* to Your Lordship, from which I can never be excused; And for paying which, when I am permitted to do so, I must think my self still the further indebted to Your Goodness: And *That* I have always found so very Great, that I could almost take

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Encouragement from *thence* to
hope for Your Pardon to my pre-
sent Presumption. But I am sure, I
must ever look upon my self as the
more highly oblig'd to Your Lord-
ship's Kindness, for all those nu-
merous *Favours*, upon all occasions,
with so much Readiness conferr'd
upon me; the more frequent Oppor-
tunities You shall be pleas'd to
allow me of expressing my self, ei-
ther in this way, or any other In-
stance within my Power,

My Gracious LORD,

Your most Oblig'd,

Humble, and Dutiful

Servant, and Chaplain,

WILLIAM TILLY.

PREFACE.

THE former Part of these Sermons, if I may guess by the general Acceptation they met with, at their first coming out, may have done some little good. And because I was not willing they should be quite lost in loose and scatter'd Papers, I have taken care to have them Reprinted with the rest of this Book: That, if they should happen to continue hereafter, they may stand as a Testimony of my Zeal and Integrity, at least, in Protest- ing against the ill Principles and Practices of the Times in which they were written; As I am very sensible, they have been already an Argument, in the Opinions of some Men, both against my Person and my Interest.

I am

The Preface.

I am very far, however, from repenting, or being asham'd of any thing I have there deliver'd; And though I had much rather, at any time, be engag'd on Points, that more immediately refer to the Doctrine and Practice of Christianity; yet, I should not be Discourag'd, by any thing I have met with hitherto, from Preaching and Proceeding in the very same Style and Manner I have already done, if there should ever be Occasion for it again, from the Degeneracy and Corruption of the Age, which I hope there never will be.

The rest of this Collection being written in a less Popular way, because more immediately design'd for a Learned Audience, I had little, or no farther Use of them. To those, for whom they were intended, I am sure nothing can be difficult; from whom if any thing receive an Approbation, there needs nothing else to Recommend it.

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Preach'd before the University, January XXXI.

1704. The Third Edition.

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The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee that I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican.

I fast twice in the Week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Preach'd First before the University of Oxford, 1708. And Afterwards before the Right Honourable the Lord-Mayor, and the Aldermen of London, at St. Paul's Cathedral, on Sunday, November XI. 1711. The Second Edition.

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But

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S E R M O N

Preach'd Before the

University of OXFORD

Monday, January XXXI. 170⁴

The Third Edition.

JOHN XVI. 2.

—*Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service.*

WHEN the *Light* of our Conscience, which God originally set up within our Souls, and next under his own Holy Word, intended to be the Rule and *immediate* Guide of our Lives, shall it self once become *Erroneous* and *Corrupt*, 'tis beyond Conception, into what fatal Consequences this must lead Men, and what Blindness and Confusion must of Necessity follow from thence, upon our whole Conduct and Course of Action; and that, howsoever we consider Men in a

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man.

SERM. I. manner as single, and independent upon Society, without any great Relation to, or Combination with each other. But when publick Bodies, and Communities of Men, shall once come to unite in a Common Error, to promote an ill Cause, this is so Unnatural a Thing, and must breed such Convulsions, both in Church and State, as must sorely *Threaten*, if not determine in the Ruine and Dissolution of Both. When Men shall Combine together, for Reasons of their own vicious Interest, in a Distemper'd and Seditious State, to set up the common Cry of Religion and Conscience, and shall run a Cause up or down upon it, as it either happens to be for, or against their Designs: This is an Artifice that seldom fails to take; it does indeed so quickly kindle, and usually so fire the Spirits of Men, that nothing less can quench it than the Blood of those that set themselves to oppose its Progress: The Generality of the giddy Multitude, upon whom yet the main Issues of Government depend, running away with the first Hint; and never so much as doubting but that the Name of Conscience alone, will bear them out in all the Outrages they commit, as they imagine, in Obedience to it: As if the bare Inscription of God and Religion upon the Banner, were sufficient to justify the Cause, or Men could never do amiss, when under a blind and ignorant Zeal they intended well. 'Tis certain, that wheresoever in any State or Government, these Sacred Names have been pretended to a bad Cause, the Wounds they have given, have there gone deeper; and the Scars left behind, have been more wide and visible, than from
any

On Monday January XXXI.

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any other Reason of Dissention whatsoever; and no Wars in the World have prov'd more Cruel and Severe than Religious Ones; there being no Principle in Human Nature, on which Men act so violently, when they are once set upon it, as on that of Conscience: And consequently, there can be none, in which it concerns Men more not to be Mistaken.

In this Chapter our Saviour addresseth himself to prepare and confirm the Minds of his Disciples against those many, and violent Persecutions, he foresaw would fall upon them for the Sake of Himself, and his Religion. He tells them, that in Proposing his Gospel to the World, they should be encounter'd with all the Strength and Power of it, and be liable to the utmost Severities from it, which the *Pride, Interest, and Ill-Nature* of Men could raise against them: Nay, and that in thus dealing with them, Men should alledge Conscience for it, and so, out of a pretended Principle of Religion it self, Oppose and Persecute the best Religion in the World: *The time cometh,* says he, *that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth God service.*

In treating on these Words, I shall, *First*, Enquire from whence it is, and from what Principles, Men are drawn to commit things in themselves utterly Unlawful, even the Greatest Villanies in the World, under a Pretence of Religion and Conscience.

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Secondly, I will, in some measure, examine the *Proceedings*, and the *Pretences*, of those Ill Men who brought the Guilt of the Royal Martyr's Blood upon our Kingdom, as upon this Day; and shall endeavour to shew how utterly Insufficient the Latter were to justify the Former.

And when we have seen, under the Two former Heads, the evil Rise, Tendency, and Unhappy Consequence of Ill Principles, and a Misguided Conscience, and that, both in General and Particular; I shall endeavour, in the

Third and last Place, to lay down some Directions for our Conduct, in regard both to our own Principles; and our Behaviour in relation to the bad Principles of other Men.

And, *First*, I am to enquire from whence it is, and from what Principles, Men are drawn to commit the greatest Villanies in the World, under a Pretence of Religion and Conscience. 'Tis certain there are no Two Things in the Universe so widely distant from each other in their own Natures, as *Virtue* and *Vice*, and so impossible to be ever reconcil'd. So that it would really be a Matter of our greatest Wonder, if it did not almost continually fall under our Notice, that Men should ever come to be so Fatally and Grossly Mistaken about these Things: Especially when God Almighty has taken all the Care to prevent it, that could possibly have been expected from the Best and Wisest Father, and Governour of Mankind.

For

On Monday January XXXI.

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SERM. I.

For what is the great End of that noble Principle of Reason, which he has put within our Breasts; but to Discern and Determine the difference between Good and Evil? And has not God taken care to place such Characters of Distinction upon both, that even by the Light of Nature, if a Man attends with any Care, he cannot be Mistaken as to the main Points of his Duty. But then, besides all this, where, in any Instance, our Natural Light might Fail, or prove Obscure, there we have the clear and open Revelation of his Word and Will for our Direction. And though 'tis possible indeed, after all, there may remain some particular Instances of our Duty a little more perplex'd, and not so very Plain and Easy to the Apprehensions of Men, without a more diligent Heed and Attention to them: Yet these are not the Points about which the foulest and most pernicious Errors are committed; the good Providence of God ordinarily preventing those Evils, and leading us with greater Security through those Paths which we are less able to Discern our selves. But they are the great Strokes of Duty, the most Fundamental Laws of our Nature, of the greatest Importance, and most common Use, about which our Mistakes are most frequently made, with the greatest Reproach to our Reason, and Danger to our Souls: Those, in whose Faces are so clearly and plainly discernable such Lines of Beauty and Deformity, that one would think it were Impossible to make a wrong Election. A Man, in order to be informed about these Things, need only open his Eyes, and they lie before him; the Vertues being of so ap-

SERMON I prov'd and highly Excellent a Nature, and so level to the Apprehension and Capacity of every Man, that we cannot but close in with them upon the first Proposal, and confess their Excellence. The Vices, of so Black and Heinous a Complexion, that a Man that runs may Read the Mark upon them, as clearly as that of old, upon the *Forehead of Cain*. And yet after all that God and Nature have done to prevent it, How mischievously and fatally have we known Men Blunder, and Stumble, and Fall, even in these very Things themselves? 'Tis yet within the Memory of the present Age, when one of the most complicated pieces of Villany that was ever yet heard of, in any Nation under Heaven, almost as bad as Hell could Suggest, or Men Conceive, was first with all Solemnity of Deliberation and Counsel Approv'd, and then Consecrated under a colourable Title, and then Acted with Applause: When the very Flames of Hell within the Hearts of Men, were mistaken for the genuine Fire of Devotion, and the Devilish Spirit of Faction and Sedition, Sainted under the specious Names of a Just Defence of Liberty, and Religion. 'Tis so easy, we find, for Men of some Tempers, and some Interests, to make any thing Vice and Vertue as they please; to interpret Sedition, and the Subversion of Church and State, but as a due Concern for a *Good Old Cause*; and the Murder of God's Supreme and most Sacred Minister, as a Lawful Zeal to himself.

Now since we find the Effects of a misguided Zeal so very fatally *Mischievous*, it cannot be thought an uselefs Design, to enquire more par-

particularly, whence these Errors flow, and what Principles these are, that are apt so far to Mislead, and Abuse the Consciences of Men, about Good and Evil, as to engage them in the Blackest Designs and Practices, under a colour, in the mean-time, of Obedience and Duty to God himself.

The Mistakes of Men's Minds in this Case, arise chiefly from a twofold Original:

First, From an extreme Ignorance of the true Nature of Religion.

Secondly, From the fond Prejudices of Men, and their blind Zeal to a Religious Party. I could here mention many others; as a fix'd and absolutely resolv'd Pursuit of a Man's own Interest; a proud Stubbornness of Will, refusing to submit to the Divine Authority; and bent upon its own sinful Inclinations; the Power of Evil Habits; whereby a Man becomes unwilling to undergo the Trouble, and the Convictions of a clearer Information; and many other Reasons of Errors, which might be produc'd, almost as infinite as Error is itself. But I shall confine my self to the two former, as being most pertinent to the Occasion, and comporting best with my Design in this Discourse, and the compass of Time allotted me for it.

And *First*, Men come to be so desperately Mistaken about Good and Evil, from an extreme Ignorance of the true Nature of Religion. This was the Ground and Bottom upon which proceeded all that Opposition the Jews and Heathen World made against our Blessed Saviour, and His Religion, at the first Publication of it; in which notwithstanding

SERM. I. they were highly Criminal, and upon no account whatever to be excused. For they ought certainly to have considered his Doctrine better, when it came recommended with such fair Pretences, and so much Authority from the God of Nature to confirm it; to have look'd into its Nature and Design; to have Scann'd and Examin'd the Laws and Rules of Life it brought with it, and the Weight of those Encouragements it gave to the observance of them: And then 'tis impossible they should ever have thought it their Interest to have resisted it. And therefore, that they would apply themselves to such Unjust, and Cruel Methods, to stifle the Christian Faith, and to hinder its Propagation in the World, our Saviour ascribes it wholly to their Ignorance of the Nature and Will of God his Father, and of Himself his only Son: *These things will they do unto you,* says he to his Disciples, *because they have not known the Father nor Me.* What greater Evidence can there be indeed, that Men know nothing of the Nature of God, or of the Gospel of his Son, than when they shall venture to do such things (as they pretend) for his Sake, which are not so much as Reconcilable with the common Dictates of Nature and Humanity? For is not God himself of a Pure and Holy, a Mild and Merciful Nature? And must not that Religion which He can approve of, be such, as in it self is most suited to produce and promote the like Temper in the Souls of Men? Such as will render Men Pure and Peaceable, Tender and Compassionate, Kind and Excusable; that so they may approve themselves the *Children of their Father which is in Heaven,* whilst

John 16. 3.

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SERM. 1.²

whilst they resemble him in the most lovely Features of his Nature, his Goodness and his Mercy. We are told by the Apostle, that *the Wisdom which cometh from above, that is, the True Religion, which God will own himself the Author of, is both Pure and Peaceable, Gentle, and Easy to be entreated.* And therefore, With what Face can Men of *Seditious and Turbulent* Spirits, that are Restless and Uneasy under Government, fomenting Strife and Faction in the *State*, and Schism and Division in the *Church*, pretend themselves Votaries of an Humble, Submissive and Obedient Saviour, or to have any Interest in that Religion, whose End and Design they so much Contradict in their Lives and Behaviour? For whatsoever Shews and Pretences of Conscience these Men may carry before them, or however by an awkward and demure Saintliness, and a precise Hypocrisy, they may insinuate themselves into the fond Opinions of easy Souls, it is not more certain that the *Christian Religion* is True, than that these Men do not live in Conformity to it.

It was the old Error of the *Heathen World*, that they Entertained wrong Opinions about the Nature of God, imagining him Wanton, Fierce and Cruel, Bloody and Revengeful; and therefore to appease him, they thought themselves oblig'd to Worship and Honour him, in a way which they conceiv'd most suitable to their own Notions of him. And from thence we find in the Laws and Services of their Religion, such a mixture of Impurity, such Barbarous and Bloody Rites, as could not but in themselves, be infinitely Offensive

SERM. I to the Pure and Perfect Deity, whom they pretended to Adore. Yet these *Gentiles* certainly thought with themselves, that in all these unnatural Mysteries of their Worship, they did things highly Grateful to Heaven, and would have very much resented it, if any one should have pretended to have question'd their Title to the Divine Favour and Protection upon that Account. So far is it possible for Human Nature to be deprav'd, *And how far* Misapprehensions concerning God, and the True Spirit and Temper of Religion, may carry even Christians themselves to act, upon the same pretence, those things that are yet in their own Nature most contrary to the Nature of God, and His Laws, we have a very Melancholy Evidence in that Great and Signal Revolt from the Purity and Simplicity of Christ, that of the *Romish Church*; of whose *Faith and Doctrine*, if we may guess by those Lewd Practices, and that Persecuting Spirit, that Reign throughout that Church, we may, without a Breach of Charity, affirm of them, that they are wholly mistaken in the Design and Nature of the Gospel they Profess.

And our Dissenting Brethren at Home (however they may think themselves injured by the Comparison) little imagine, how nearly they acted, in their late Behaviour, to the Principles and Practice of the Church of *Rome*. For is not the Doctrine of Deposing and Killing of Kings, That, upon which the Power of *Rome* does stand, and by which it keeps up its Awe and Authority upon the Kingdoms of the Earth? Is it not the Darling Principle of that Church, and the Choicest Jewel the *Pope* has

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has in his Cabinet? So that our Rebels could not SERMON I.
have taken a more ready way to Gratify the E-
nemies of God and His Church, than by doing
as they did. And if they had purposely con-
trived to get into Favour with his Holiness,
the most likely Method that could be thought
of, was to remove that Blessed Prince out of
the way, that always stood the Fence and Bul-
wark to our Religion and Laws, against the
bold Invasions of Error and Superstition. So
that, no doubt, the Papal Consistory owes the
Covenanting Brethren a great many Thanks
for the Signal Service they have done them.
Since these Good Men have answered any De-
sign the Pope could have had upon the *Royal*
Martyr as effectually, as if the Holy Father
had dispatch'd a Commission of *Jesuits* on pur-
pose upon that Errand.

But whence can we imagine Men should
ever become Guilty of such Horrid Practices as
these? But from the grossest Ignorance, or
Forgetfulness, both of God and their own
Duty. Had these Men but so much as look'd
into the Great Law of their Lives, the *Holy*
Scriptures, they might there have found how
very Tender God Himself is of the Lives and
Interests of Kings, of Good Ones more especi-
ally: How jealous for their Honour; His own
Authority, indeed, being so nearly concern'd
in them; and all Affronts, that are offer'd to
the Sovereign Power, striking yet higher, and
rebounding upon God Himself. But thus it
is, when Men forget to try the Lawfulness of
their Proceedings by the Rule of God's Word:
When Men leave the Law and the Testimony,
those Eternal Measures of Good and Evil, and
fancy

SERM. I. fancy a Law within themselves: When Men will be the Framers of their own Religion; and attribute all the Blind and Enthusiastick Heats they feel within themselves, to the Operations of the Holy Spirit: Though, we know, they were kindled from another Principle, even Hell it self; and are likely to have their Reward and Portion there.

A Second Account that may be given of these Errors of Conscience, whereby Men come to run themselves upon the Grosest Crimes, under a Pretence of Sanctity, is from a Fond Prejudice, and Blind Zeal to a Religious Party. Let us closely Examine the Religion of these Men that cry out so loud for Reformation; and we shall find it nothing but some Childish Principles, and Prejudices, they have suck'd in, before they understood any Thing; and afterwards, what there wants of Reason and Evidence in those Opinions, they take care to make up, and supply, by a Stubborn and Perverse Adherence to them; and therein think to justify themselves, by Quarrelling with all the World, that is not of the same Perswasion with themselves. There are some Men, for Instance, whose whole Religion, it may be suspected, terminates in a Complaint and Quarrel at some particular Way or Manner of Religion; possibly against the *Rites* and *Ceremonies* of our own Church: Things in their own Nature Indifferent, which we don't pretend to be Absolutely Necessary; but they would have us reject them as utterly Unlawful. Now when Men have once embrac'd such Principles as these, and so listed themselves under a Party, they are apt to conclude themselves immedi-
ately

ately bound to vouch all the Opinions of it to their utmost, because they fallily imagine the Cause of God, and his Truth, stands or falls with that particular Model of Religion they themselves have consented to, and are very positive is the only right one. And from hence it proceeds, that whilst such Men are busy about Strifes, perhaps of no great Concernment in themselves, and their Heads and Hands employed in the Defence of a Party in Religion against what they think, and call another, they in the mean time forget what true Religion it self is; which indeed is of no Party, nor to be confin'd to any. But we are sure one main Branch of it consists in a kind and charitable Disposition towards all Men, even not excepting those that differ from us in Opinion. But when Men shall conceive ill Surmises of their Fellow-Christians, by reason of Difference in Judgments; and so let their Hearts boyl up to an unnatural Ferment of Rancour and Malice, it is no Wonder this should break out, and discover it self in the outward Actions, and thence, in a furious and turbulent Zeal, carry Men on to the utter Destruction of all those that oppose them. *For if ye bite and devour one another, says the Apostle, take heed ye be not consumed one of another.* In Gal. 5. 15. In general we may depend on this at all times, that whenever Men oppose an Establish'd and True Religion, they must do it by ill Means; and yet 'tis not so very strange some Men should think any Means and Methods to this purpose honest and upright, when they look upon nothing to be so, but what makes for their own Interest and Party.

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So that we see it is not so very difficult to give an Account, whence Persecutions should arise from a Party of Christians against the true Worshippers of God, though each Side seems to agree in the Profession of the same common Faith; because there may be such a Fondness in some Men for the distinguishing Opinions of their own Sect, and so very bitter and malicious a Spirit towards all that contradict them, that while they are intent only upon the Defence and Advancement of their own private Faction, without a due Regard to the Great and Fundamental Principles of Christianity, they mistake their Duty, and do some things in the pretended Favour of Religion, which yet are most contrary to it in its true Design and Interest. But these Men would do well to consider, *That the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*: The furious and passionate Tempers of Men, are not the best Instruments to be employ'd in the Cause of God's Truth and Honour. And therefore when Men feel such Unchristian Risings in their Breasts as these, they may justly suspect there is some other Fountain from whence they come, and that they proceed not from the calm and gentle Spirit of God, who breaths nothing but Love and Peace upon the Minds of Men.

James 1. 20.

I come now to the *second* thing propos'd, namely to examine in some measure the *Proceedings*, and *Pretences*, of Conscience, on which the late Murtherers acted, in bringing the Guilt of *Royal Blood* upon this Nation, and to shew how utterly insufficient these *Pretences* were to justify them in it. And here, I pre-

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I presume, no Body will deny, that what these **SERMON**
good and holy Men did, was by them given out
to be upon a Religious Account, and *For the
Lord's Sake, and in his Cause*; as those im-
pious Hypocrites abus'd the Great and Blessed
Name to their own base and wicked Designs.
And surely not many of their Posterity to
this Day will dare to question this, when they
so far justify their Forefathers in the Fact, as
to refuse joyning with us in this Day's Solemn-
nity, or most unnaturally to pervert it into a
matter of Contempt and Scorn; thereby in-
timating, as plainly as they dare, that they
see no reason the Nation has to make this
Day's Action a matter of publick Repentance;
it being, as they take it, happily begun, car-
ried on, and finish'd for so glorious a Cause,
and upon such conscientious Accounts. These
Men very well understand, that nothing less
than the highest Pretences of Conscience can
colour over so foul and detestable an Act, com-
mitted against the clearest Reasons to the con-
trary, against plain Testimonies of the Word
of God, and the most sacred Bands of Alle-
giance to the best of Kings. Which Action
of theirs, had it wanted such a Disguise as this,
they too well knew would have made their
Names stink (as it did indeed notwithstanding)
among all the Nations about them, and the
Ears of every one that should hear it tingle.
And indeed it would have been a much too
impudent, and barefac'd Impiety, to commit a
thing so directly and plainly against Religion
and Reason both, and not to seek some Excuse,
from one of them at least, to palliate it.

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Now the Pretences upon which these Men proceeded, we may discover more fully and particularly, by considering what the Propositions were, which, as the only Terms of Reconcilement with the King, were by their Commissioners offer'd to him at the Treaty of *Uxbridge*; to which if he would not Consent, as in Reason and Conscience he could not, they gave him to understand, they should take their own Measures, and proceed against him as they should think fit; that is, as their own deep Malice and Faction should incline them.

And to omit matters of less Consequence, I shall only mention the two former Articles insisted on by them in that Treaty, (the third not having so immediate a Relation to my Design) which were these that follow:

* *First*, That the King would give his Consent for the Abolishing *Episcopacy*; and this under a Pretence of *Prelatical Corruptions*, and of the Necessity of *purger Ordinances*.

† *Secondly*, That all the *Military Power* of the Nation, should be put into the Hands of those Men whom They should think fit to Choose for that purpose, and in whom (as the Cant then ran) they might *Confide*; and that the King himself should not have the Liberty to except against any One they should pitch upon for this Design; and this, under a pretence of securing the Religion and Liberties of the Nation: These things indeed they had often intimated, and plainly drove at before; but now they came to press them peremptorily, and were resolv'd to take no Denial.

* *Ld. Clarendon, B. 7. P. 288. Item B. 8. Page 446, 450.*

† *Ld. Clarendon, B. 8. P. 453.*

Now I shall endeavour to shew how unreasonable these insolent Demands of these Men were; and, consequently, how utterly Inexcusable their Proceedings against the King, because he neither would, nor could, in regard to the Welfare of Himself, the Church, and Nation, give his Consent to these Things.

And *First*, As for the Abolishment of *Episcopal* Government; They could not indeed have touch'd the King in a more tender Point than this: and **That* they themselves very well knew. For out of his hearty Zeal to God's Honour, and an inquisitive Spirit into the Affairs of Religion, and the several Constitutions of Churches, he had made a careful Observation, what Form of Church Government in the World had both the fairest Pretences to, and the most real Effects of, a pure and Apostolical Piety. And then by his great Learning and Skill in the Histories of the primitive Church, he could not but discern the most perfect agreement and Conformity, almost in every thing, between those first Ages and the *Church of England*. And therefore as he was the Patron of one of the Best Churches in the World and in a very peculiar manner the *Defender of the Faith*, by being himself one of the greatest Instances of the Power of it: how could he in point of Honour, and Conscience, admit of any such Proposal, that should offend against the best Sense and Judgment of his own Mind; and by a base Compliance betray the Interest of a Church, so pure and primitive, so well founded,

SERM. 1. and so long continued, into the Hands of Licentious and Unreasonable Men; who, for their own parts, neither understood, nor desired the Advancement of God's Glory, nor the Honour of Religion. Was not the King oblig'd in answer to his great Character, to consult and provide what was Best for his Church and Nation? And could he be perswaded there was any thing better for them, than the present Constitution under which they were Establish'd? Must the purest Discipline in the World yield it self up to be Trampled on by the Insults of a Contemptuous Enemy, and the Best and Happiest Laws of Government bend to the Humours of a wanton People.

Besides, was not the King oblig'd, in pursuance of his Coronation Oath, to Maintain the *Church of England* as by Law Establish'd? And would they have Him Perjure Himself to gratify their Ambition? But they'l say, the King was no longer held by that Oath, when the Legislative Power of the Nation should think fit to remit the Obligation of it: And this they pretend both Houses of Parliament did, in requiring of Him a Change of Government in the Church.

I shall not here urge, that those Men who requir'd this, could not be the total Legislative Power of the Nation: By the Constitution of *England*, the Legislature being lodg'd in Prince and People jointly, the Royal Consent being Necessary to stamp an Authority on a Law, or to repeal it. But to pass this by, How can it be prov'd, that those Men that thus Sate and Acted both against the King and Law, did so much

much as make up but one the least part of the Legislature? 'Tis plain the King Himself excepted against them as a Parliament, in their Proceedings of this Nature, and in those strange Propositions and Ordinances made by them upon other Occasions; which yet were not more Illegal than the present. I shall produce His own Declaration to this Purpose; as 'tis to be found in the Great and Excellent Historian of the late Times.

"Our good Subjects, says the King, will no longer look upon these and the like Results, as upon the Counsels and Conclusions of both our Houses of Parliament (though all the World knows, even that Authority can never justify things Unwarrantable by the Law) they well know how few of the Persons trusted by them, are trusted at their Consultations, of above Five Hundred of the Commons, not Fourscore: and of the House of Peers, not a Fifth part: That they who are present, enjoy not the Privilege and Freedom of Parliament, but are Besieg'd by an Army, and Aw'd by the same Tumults which drove us, and their Fellow-Members from thence, to Consent to what some few Seditious Schismatical Persons among them do propose.

Thus far the King's own Words, as they are recited by that Noble Author. From whence it plainly appears, His Majesty did not look upon this Proposition about the Dissolution of the Episcopal Government of this Church, as an Act of any part of the Le-

SERMON.  gillature; but as an insolent Demand, made by a thin Assembly of Treacherous and Violent Men; so that, inasmuch as the King was oblig'd to the far best, and greatest part of His People; and their Representatives in Parliam^{ty} to Preserve the *Church of England* as by Law Establish'd, it is certain, these few Seditious Persons could not Absolve Him from His Oath; and he was, consequently, bound by That, and by the Law, to withhold His Consent to this Proposal: Since otherwise, He must have falsified his Oath, in not doing his utmost to preserve the Church, by hindring a Subversion of its Government, which these Men drove at.

Another very considerable Objection against the Kings complying to Abolish Episcopacy was this, that it would be no less than Sacrilege to take the Bishop's Lands away, and to alienate them to other Designs than to which they were at first devoted. So that His Majesty could by no means assent to the Request of these Men, without breaking through the most sacred Ties of Conscience, and running Himself upon Two of the blackest Crimes in the World, *Perjury* and *Sacrilege*, at once.

But here, though upon this account of Sacrilege, we see the highest Reason in the World the King had to deny this Proposal, and no Reason upon any other Account to grant it; yet when we mention Bishop's Lands, we may possibly discover some Reason why these Men should make it: For no great wonder if the plentiful Endowments of the Church, be a sweet Bait to draw and allure the Covetousness and Ambition of those Men, that

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that care not what becomes of Religion. **SERMON**
They had, without doubt, long before pleas'd themselves, with a Fancy what a delicious Morsel the Lands of the Church would be, especially in the Mouths of Saints; and therefore, they might be apt to think with themselves, why should they not have some Right to Possess, what they imagin'd they could Relish so well. So that they were their own base Ends and Designs, that were to be served by the Ruine of the Church; and not any Principles of Conscience for Reforming it, that put them upon such Projects as these. And if this be not sufficient to Discover the Unreasonableness, and Unlawfulness of this first Demand of these Men, and to leave them inexcusable for what they did upon the Refusal of it, 'tis only amongst those, who too much favour their Interest and Party, and therefore are unwilling to acknowledge their Guilt.

The Second Demand of these Men, at the same time offer'd to the King by them, was in no wise more reasonable, or more modest than the former, and intrench'd upon the Honour and Prerogative of the King himself, no less than the other did upon the Rights and Privileges of the Church. It was this, That all the Military Power of the Nation should be put into the Hands of those Men whom they should think fit to entrust with it, and in whom they might confide; and that it should not be left in the King's Power to except against any one they should pitch upon for this Design: And this under pretence of securing the Religion and Liberties of the Nation.

But,

SERMON. But, Who is there that does not see at the first Glance, that in granting this, the King must have divested himself of all his Honour and Authority? For, when his Power should have been once gone, his bare Title would have prov'd very insignificant, and he must have even stood to the Contempt of those Men, whether he should any longer wear his Crown or no; from whom he had no more reason to expect any Kindness, upon any account of their Principles, or good Nature, than he had to trust them upon his Experience of their Loyalty. They pretended indeed they would have been very willing to have allow'd him still the Name of their Lord and Sovereign; but for what purpose was this; when their open Design was to rob Him of all the Majesty that High Name imports? For when once he should have given up his Sword, his Sceptre could not have long defended him. And therefore it was high time for him to think of securing both, when Men were once grown to such a Pitch of Insolence, as to Contend with Him for either.

And all this these worthy Patriots did upon a presumption that they were a Free People, and out of a generous Design, as they pretended, of maintaining the Rights and Liberties of the Subject. It is true, the Rights and Liberties of a Kingdom are of very high Concernment, and Men should be allow'd, in all lawful ways, to proceed with a just Zeal in their Defence: But then how does it appear, that the Rights and Liberties of *England* were ever likely to be more secure in the Hands of a seditious and tumultuous Band of Villains, than

than under the peaceable Government of a **SER. M. I.**
just and pious King? And therefore, if it had
been only to prevent the Abuses, so much
Power had been liable to, when violent Men
should have had it within the Reach of their
Arm to do Mischief, that alone had been a
very sufficient, and a most justifiable Ground
for the King's refusing to give way to their
Desires in this Instance.

And what Use of so much Power they then
intended to have made, we now very well
know, from what they did with it afterwards,
when they had broke through all the Bounds
of Just and Right, of Loyalty and Conscience,
to come at it. For were not the very Foun-
dations of Government in these Kingdoms
raz'd, and such a Scheme of Principles intro-
duc'd amongst us as had perverted the Course
and Order of Judgment and Justice! Were
not Religion and Honour both laid in the
Dust, and the Church of **ENGLAND**, the
Glory of the Reformation, made to groan
under the Tyranny of the Oppressor! *On Their Eccles. 4. 1.*
side indeed was Power, but we had no Com-
forter!

And now let any Man judge whether these
things I have mention'd were Matters, either
fit for a King to grant, or for a People to re-
quire! Indeed by making these their Con-
ditions of Reconciliation with the King so
very absurd and intolerable, they did as good
as speak out, that they did not expect He
should agree to them; and that therein they
sought only a plausible Pretence and Opportu-
nity to betray him, upon a Supposition he
should refuse to consent to that, with which

SERMON. if he had complied, he could neither have answered it to God or his own Conscience.

And thus fell that Great and Excellent King, by the Hands of violent and bloody Men, in the Defence of a most just and righteous Cause!

We are told by an * Historian of those Times, that about Two Days before his Death, some of the Leading Men of that Party came to Him with a Paper of Proposals; which if he would have subscrib'd, they thought they could yet prevail to reverse the Sentence of his Death. But, with the Spirit of a King and of a Christian, he rejected them; declaring his resolute Intention never to betray the Welfare and Honour of his Church and People upon any Terms, by any base Compliance whatsoever. † And, when he came upon the Scaffold, He witnessed the same good Profession before all Men, that it was for God and his People that He came there to Suffer; and that He needed not to have come there, if he would have taken the Advice and Methods of ill Men to have declin'd it.

He was a Prince whose Life was full of Trouble and Disquiet occasion'd to him by the malicious Practices of His Enemies; but He had this to comfort Him, that they were Enemies at the same time to the *Truth* it self, and upon the same Ground that they were so to Him. Though he desired nothing more than to be the Father of his People, and, next to the Honour of God, (the Supreme and Ruling Principle of his Life,) aim'd at nothing so

* Dugdale's *Short View of the Troubles of England*, Chap. 30. p. 372.

† Dugdale, Chap. 30. p. 373.

much,

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much, as to promote the Glory and Interest of his Kingdom; yet he had this Unhappiness, common to him with the Best and Greatest Men that ever liv'd, that his most sincere and honourable Counsels and Designs were both mis-understood, and mis-construed by Evil Men. As for his Religion, He was as Exemplary for the Piety and Innocence of a Christian, as He was Admirable for the Vertues of a King; and his Devotion was so far rais'd above that of ordinary Souls, as himself was above them in his Condition. In his Life he learn'd Humility, Meekness, and Dependence upon God, by the difficulties and afflictions He underwent; and at his Death he practic'd the deepest Resignation, and gave the highest Instance of Obedience. He Died the Desire and Lamentation of every good Man, and to the everlasting Shame and Conviction of all those that had their Hands in his Blood, that had been the Contrivers, or the Abettors of his Death.

We have seen now the malignant Rise, the dangerous Tendency, and the dreadful Issues of ill Principles and a misguided Conscience; and that both in the general and particular, under the Two former Parts of this Discourse. I shall now, by way of a just Inference from what has been already spoken, go on to the last Part of my Design.

To propose, *Thirdly*, some Directions for our Conduct and Behaviour in regard both to our own Principles, and in relation to the bad Principles of other Men.

And surely a Discourse of this Nature, if ever, is become necessary in an Age that seems to

SERM. I. to have run off into so general a Looseness in point of Judgment, as well as Practice; Where so wide and deep a Corruption, or a no less fatal Indifference has so long prevail'd upon Men of all Orders amongst us, in Principles, both of Church and State.

In the Church (which is the best and truest Support of the Civil Government) we have, not so long since, felt the almost fatal Shake, in the sly Designs of her Enemies to undermine Her, and the Treacheries of her own false Friends and Patrons in their Defence of Her. We have liv'd in these Days to see Men, who, one would think, are nearly concern'd in, and live upon the Interests of our Church, and derive their own Honour and Advantages from Her, even these very Men themselves, when Occasion requir'd it, recoiling back from Her Assistance, in the time of Her Necessity, leaving Her unguarded and open, without those natural Supports and Fences, which are necessary, not only for Her prosperous Continuance, but, almost, Her very Being: Nay, we have seen Men that profess themselves Friends to our *Sion*, and to have their Names written in her, with their own Hands breaking away the Hedges set for the Defence of the *Holy Mountain*; beating down the Barriers and removing the *Ancient Landmarks* of our Constitution; and cancelling all the Characters of Distinction between our own and other Churches; thus letting in the *Beast out of the wood*, and the *wild beast of the field* upon Her; the Wildness and Fury of Fanaticism and Superstition to over-run and devour Her. How many Designs on foot, to take off our,
Rigour!

Psal. 80. 12.

Exod. 19. 12.

Psal. 80. 13.

Rigour! to smooth and qualify the Strictness and Severity of our Church's Discipline; and and to soften her Doctrine upon Principles of Compliance and Moderation! So, by Degrees, to melt down the Strength of her Constitution, and to bring her to the Ground, even to the Dust, to a flat level with the groveling Religion of the *Low Countries*, and the Platform of *Geneva*: As if our Church could not prove her Charity, and good Nature, without turning a Prostitute; nor her Humility, without bowing down her Neck that her Enemies may go over and trample upon her.

In pursuance of these noble Purposes, these great and generous Designs in hand, for the good of our Church, we have known the Doctrines of it drawn away and sunk from their just and native Sense; our Articles expounded with so very Catholick a Spirit, with so much Vertue of Moderation, and so Comprehensive a Reach of Charity; as, if once admitted, would effectually compass the Project; and it would really raise our Wonder and Concern, were we not well assur'd that the Reach of some Men's Knowledge and Judgment in these Doctrines, is equally Comprehensive with their Charity; and that their constant Endeavours to support the Church of *ENGLAND*, are answerable to their known, and usual Zeal, and Affection for Her.

But, indeed, we are beholden to Men, if they will please to do us less Mischief, as they think, than they are able; if they will only endeavour at a *Comprehension* in the Articles of our Church, as not impossible, when some of them can tell us, at another time, that a

Separ-

SERM. I. Separation from Her is not only *Justifiable*, but *Commendable*!

How? *Justifiable* and *Commendable*? What When the Terms of our Communion are not only Lawful, but Holy, and Just, and Good? Bound upon us by the Authority of the Sacred and Civil Power; excellently well fitted for the Uses of Piety; and, most of them, the pure and primitive Results of the Wisdom of Christianity, in the most early Ages of it? Is Separation from such a Church as this (not to insist upon *Commendable*, for not a Word, but is it) upon any Reason, in any Case, by any Means whatsoever to be Justified? If it be, tis only in the Sense that Word bears in *Scotland*, where to be *Justified* is to be Condemned and Punish'd by the Law: And so far, indeed, we are ready to allow, that a Separation from our Church very well *may* and *ought* to be *Justified*: And we could wish that those ill Men too, that speak such despightful Things of an excellent Constitution, of which they are not worthy, were in due Measure *Justified* likewise.

But is this then the Sense and Language of Church-Men, those that pretend to live under, and should Protect our Discipline? Is a Separation from the Church of *ENGLAND*, Justifiable in their Opinion? How then are we sunk and declin'd from the Primitive Sense, and Excellent Spirit of our Fore-fathers! How gone off and fallen from our Noble Cause, and from our own Honour with it! Where is that Brave, Generous, Cordial Zeal for the

* Dr. Hammond's Annotat. on Matth. XI. 19. Mr. Hotchkis's Disc. of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, Chap. 12. Part 1st.

Church our Mother, which once burn'd in **SERM. I.**
 the Hearts and Affections of Her Professors to-
 wards Her, and sparkled at their Lips in their
 Defence and Maintenance of Her! *How are*
the Mighty fallen, and the Weapons of War, of ^{2 Sam. I. 27.}
 our Defence perished!

The Truth is, we have drawn so deep a
 Tincture from the bad Influence of the Late
 Times, that we are not asham'd to appear with
 it about us in the Present. And we have the
 Courage to vouch those Ill Principles under
 the Best of Governments, which we took up
 and espous'd under the Worst. We had so long
 liv'd under, and complied with the Measures
 and Inclinations of the Late Extraordinary
 Government, that we are touch'd with the
 Spirit of it ever since. And God only knows
 when we shall again return to our Selves; To
 that Spirit, and those Principles, by which
 our Church, and our Religion were at first
 Founded, have been since Supported, and
 to which we must again go back, if ever we
 desire they should be long Establish'd. But
 how far are we distant from these things at pre-
 sent! Whilst many amongst us, even of our
 own Communion, are become altogether In-
 different what Principles they entertain, or
 whether they have any: Others of us seem to
 acknowledge the Necessity of some, only by re-
 taining ill ones.

I shall therefore speak something in the first
 place with regard to our own Principles, and
 then to those of other Men.

First then, Let us make it our strict Care to
 preserve our own Principles Sincere and Un-
 corrupt; not to suffer any Consideration of

In-

SERM L

Interest or Disadvantage to sway us from our own best Sense and Conscience, to bend or to pervert us. 'Tis certain the Goodness of our Cause will justify the highest Zeal and Resolution with which we can proceed in its Defence: And we cannot desert, or entertain a slight and cold Opinion of our own Excellent Church and Constitution, without being Injurious to the Interests of Religion and Government in general.

It may be indeed, that a firm Profession of the Truth is not always attended with the outward Advantages of Reputation or Preferment in the Friends and Patrons of it: In these Days however, we have no Reason to think ourselves forsaken even of these; Honesty and Good Principles having the *Promises* also of the present Time, the Favour and Countenance of Government to Promote and Encourage them *without*, as well as the silent Approbations of Conscience to Reward and Crown them *within*. But setting aside these, and all other Temporal Respects (upon which if our Resolution at any time be Founded, it must prove Unsteady) at whatsoever time hereafter it may be the Lot of our Church, our Holy and Suffering Church, to fall under the Frowns of Power, under a Disrepute from the Interests or Numbers of Men above Her, Let us have the Courage and the Conscience to appear Bravely for Her; to stand with Her Establishment, and to fall with Her Dissolution. So shall we have the Pure and Un-
 rupted Pleasure of Rejoicing in the Days of Her Prosperity, and be secure from the Smirings of our own Consciences, from the Reproaches of Baseness and Apollacy at her Fall. Let

Is. 66. 10.

On Monday January XXXI.

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SERMON I.

Eph. 6. 14.

Let us therefore *Stand* having our *loyns girt about*; and prepar'd for any Event; our Resolutions Firm and Steady; not to be shaken at any time with any present Gust of Fortune, nor to be mov'd upon any disadvantageous Prospects of the future; which ever way the Stream of Temporal Affairs runs, which ever way Preferments draw. For we may enjoy a True Cause, and a Good Conscience, well enough without Preferments: These, we are satisfied, do not always suppose, nor make Men Honest; they sometimes become the Rewards of former Baseness, and Opportunitics of Discovering more.

Shall we *Trim*, and *Turn*, and *Truckle* to every Wind of Advantage that comes over us? Shall we bend, and sneak, and give up our Integrity to a Great Man, a Powerful Hypocrite, an Atheist in a High Place? Shall we prove False to our God, to our Conscience, to our Church, to our Oaths, to our past Professions, and our present Pretences; and all this, to wind our selves out of our Reason and Honesty, into the Favour and Interest of One who is Ten Times worse than we can make our selves? And then shall we go and stand in the House of God, take in our Hands his Holy Ordinances, after we have thus stain'd and polluted the Glory of them; have render'd *them* and *our selves* contemptible, by our sly Connivances, and our base Compliances, and all this to gratify a Lust, a vain Ambition? How can we expect our Church should long stand, when 'tis supported upon so much Rottensness, and contains such Principles of Corruption within it self; so many *Vipers* that gnaw through the
very

SERM. I.

very Bowels of their Mother! This we may be sure of, the same Principles that have once ruin'd our Church and Government before, (which we this Day lament) have the same Tendency in all Ages, and will, if not amended, have the same Effect again. Every Step we take from the good old Paths, in which our Ancestors trod to the Glory of God, and our Religion, and so much to their own Honour and Happiness, is an Approach towards our Ruine. Our *New ways not cast up before*; Our distinguishing away our Conscience to comply with extraordinary Measures; Our bearing down the strong Suspicions of our own Minds about the Lawfulness of our Proceedings by the importunate Clamours of a present Interest; Our changing from the acknowledged and establish'd Sense and Doctrines of our Church and Government, and screwing about every way, to find an Evasion for our Selves, with a security to our temporal Advantages, though with a Dishonour to our Faith and Reason; these things declare plainly what we must expect, as well as what we are; and pronounce our Judgment as loudly as they proclaim our Sin.

If ever then we would again be innocent; if we would be secure; if we would avert the natural and judicial Consequences of our own Treacheries that threaten us; if we desire the Blessing of God should establish us, and preserve to us the long Enjoyment of our *Church*, of our *Queen*, and of our *Government*: Let us return to what we were *once*, to our brave, noble *English* Principles as at the first; *εὐφρανόμενοι*

Greg. Naz. *ὅτις ἐσμεν, ὅτις ἦμεν ἡμεῖς*, Let us return to what

what we sometimes were, and continue no longer as we are. *Let us stand in the ways,*

Jer. 6. 16.

and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and we shall find rest for our selves and for our Nation. For as long as we are off the Hinges from our old Principles, we are in a preternatural and violent State, and cannot rest; nor can the Politick Body, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil, any more than the Natural one, long subsist and endure under so much Violence.

Again, Secondly, Let us not prejudice our Cause by a slight and cold Defence of it, by concealing or dissembling our Principles, in a time that requires us to stand up and own them, in Opposition to the powerful Combinations, and united Impudence of our Enemies. There is nothing that has more, or more frequently contributed to the Ruine of a good and worthy Cause, than the sedentary and unactive Principles of good Men, fully convinc'd indeed in point of Conscience of the Justice of it; but either too secure, or too low-spirited to contend with Zeal and Danger for it, against a powerful and prevailing Party. What was it that drew on the late fatal and universal Revolution, the Ruin and Confusion of Church and State, and that so suddenly, and by such weak, and seemingly ineffective Instruments, but that these ill Men were more active and industrious to pull down, than honest Men to keep up and support; and acted far more vigorously upon a false and fiery Zeal, than good Men thought themselves concern'd to do upon a true, a lawful, and a necessary One. These latter acquiesc'd within

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them.

SER. M. I. themselves in the Justice and Honour of their Cause, and for that Reason were secure about the Success and Issue of it: But this was a Conclusion, we know, prov'd fatal then, and may do so again in times less dangerous than those.

Would we then be *safe*? Let us be awake, and at least upon our Guard against our buisy and prevailing Adversary. But if we mean by *Safety* a false Prudence and Caution how we engage in an hazardous, though a good Cause; that so by not appearing in it *now*, we may have fairer Opportunities to retreat *hereafter*, without the Reproach of Inconstancy, and so be well provided against the worst that may happen; this is base and dishonourable; unworthy the Courage of a Man, or the Spirit of a Christian. What Safety then dare we speak to our selves, when our Church and our Government are threaten'd by the Malice and Cunning of so many seditious and turbulent Spirits? What Safety, what Peace, as long as the Designs of our Enemies, the Practices of our false Friends, and their Treacheries are so many? The Ark of God is almost in the Enemies Camp, and would'st thou be *safe*? The Fundamental Principles of Religion are struck at, and would'st thou be *safe*? The Divine-Apostolical Essential Form and Right of Church-Government, is well nigh deserted by some amongst us that are nearly concern'd to maintain it, and would'st thou be *safe*? The Church of England, the Constitution, are ready to reel by the Iniquity of those that press upon them, and would'st thou be *safe*? Wrap thy self then in thy Security; but know withal, thou shalt bear the Guilt and Punishment of desert-

1 Sam. 4. 11.

Is. 24. 20.

deserting the Cause thou wilt not defend, and be reckoned as an Accomplice to all the Villanies it was in thy Power to discourage and prevent, and thou would'st not. For if the Truth it self shall suffer by our Negligence or Cowardice; if the Endeavours of other Men are slacken'd, and their Zeal chill'd by the malignant Influence of our Example, we are no better than Traytors to the Truth it self, and shall have the same Reward.

SERM. I.
Eph. 6. 14.

He that by his Reputation, or his Authority, by his Wisdom, or his Fortune, has it in his Power, in a great measure to form the Zeal of another that depends upon his Judgment, and perhaps takes his own Inclinations from those of his Superiour; If *He* shall, for fear of lessening his own Honour, and seeming too familiar with his Inferiours, in engaging in the same Cause with them, draw back, and refuse his Countenance or his Word to the Support of Truth when it is necessary; some Men perhaps may call him a reserv'd and cautious Person, but none will think him a Man of true Zeal and Honour, and most will condemn him, and that, most probably, for a safe Hypocrite, for a sly, close, and a self-deceiving Knave.

I have now done speaking of our own Principles; I will add a Word or Two concerning our Behaviour towards those, I mean the bad ones, of other Men; and shall so conclude: And it shall be only this;

That we make it our great Care and Endeavour to discountenance, and discourage as far as we are able, by all lawful means, any growing Corruption that insinuates it self into the Prin-

SERMON I. Principles of other Men, and may prove any way destructive of the Peace of the Church and Government. And this I do not take to be a Matter of meer Prudence, or Counsel only, but of Duty: Because it is so very necessary to break the Attempts, and to damp the Resolutions of ill Men. Vice, we find, is able to support it self by the joint Applause and Countenance of Men espousing it, notwithstanding the Voice of God and Conscience to the contrary: But when the Testimonies of common Respect are withdrawn from it, and 'tis left to stand alone upon its own Interest and Bottom, it must necessarily fail, and give way; having no Voucher in the Breasts of Men, of Reason or Religion to support it: For as much then as all Vice is thus insufficient in it self, and its own Strength, and the bravest Sinners of them all, whatever they may pretend, must sink and rise in their Spirits upon observing the different Behaviour of others towards them, and according to the Degrees of Approbation or Dislike, express'd to their Designs and Practices; upon this account it becomes our Duty *always* to stand off, and enter our Protestation against the publick Sins of Men, and that of how much more dangerous Consequence they are, with the greater Zeal; if it be possible, by this means, at least, to put in a Check to the Career of Iniquity, or to dash it out of Countenance for ever.

In doing this indeed, there is no doubt but we shall meet with a great deal of Opposition from our Enemies; and many plausible Reasons urg'd against us with a Colour of Truth, at the same time that these very Men themselves

selves are ruining Truth it self in its chiefest SER M. 1
Interests. To mind *brotherly* had yet *new*

Thus, for Instance, we are told in our present Controversy with these Men, that we endanger a Breach of Christian Charity, of that Lenity, and Moderation, which becomes the Spirit of Meekness, and of Christ, thus to inveigh against, and fall foul upon those that differ but a little from us in Opinion about little things. That we seem to violate the Nature and Essence of Religion it self, only to secure the Fringes and Borders of it. That surely we are much too hot in our Quarrels about things so Insignificant, and with a Difference about which, they tell us, Peace might well consist. Are they then *little* things at last, about which our Contest lies with these Men? Is the Preservation of one of the best Churches in the World, a *little* thing? A Church, which cost so many Lives of Martyrs to plant and raise it; and the infinite Labours of the best Men, and best Christians to continue and establish it. Where the *Beauty* of Holiness, the Glory of Christianity in its best and purest Ages, is preserv'd entire! A Church, which is equally distant in its Discipline from those Extremes that are most opposite to a Spirit of Religion, and admirably well qualified to procure the present Peace, and eternal Salvation of its Members! And is all this *little* or nothing to them? Are we to be blam'd for expressing a just Zeal about such things as these? And would they have a Zeal without *Heat*?

Our Expostulation with these Men is of a much like Nature, and surely with as good

SERMON I. reason as that of *Micah* with the Men of *Dan*, when they had plunder'd him of what was nearest and dearest to him, and then found fault with him for complaining; *Ye have taken away my gods which I have made*, says he, *and the priest; and ye are gone away: and what have I more? and what is this that ye say unto me; what aileth thee?* These Men are doing us all the Mischief they are able, are unsettling our Religion, changing, or debasing our Priesthood, dissolving our Discipline, corrupting our Doctrine, erecting a Tyranny over us; in short, in the last Result and Consequence, undermining our whole Church and Constitution: And then they ask, *What aileth us?* What so great Danger, or from whence? Why all this Heat and Passion? Why, where is our Heat and Passion in any Case lawful, if not where our very Life, our Religion is concern'd? But still they urge us, to what purpose is all this? What End of Religion, or Reason do we serve by it? Do we not indeed serve any? The more Shame on them for being past the means of their Reformation. But if we cannot convert them, we may a little quash their Insolence; and they may learn to be more modest, where they will not be inform'd. If Reason will not always prevail, yet Zeal may sometimes do good. A Man that is either too dull, or too stubborn to submit to an Argument, may yet feel a *Last*. We know *Gideon* taught the Men of *Succoth* with Thorns; and sharp Rebukes may enter, where cool Remonstrances and sober Reasonings would have no Effect. 'Tis true, no Man's Cause, or Conscience, will give him leave to Rail; but if he can keep with-

Judg. 18. 24

Judg. 8. 16.

within the Bounds of Innocence and Duty, SERM. I.
and at the same time serve the Interests of Religion and of Truth by a good Spirit, or a good Wit, is it then unlawful? Where can these Gifts better be laid out and sanctified than upon the Altar? Or against whom better employ'd, than against Hypocrites, and Blasphemers of our Church?

And thus I have gone through every Part of my Design. If any Man here think I have spoken some things a little more severely, in the several Parts of this Discourse, it was from a just Abhorrence at the Occasion of this Day: And let *that* Man but seriously consider with himself, what the Principles and Practices of these Men are, and what they deserve; what they have already done, and what they would do; what has been the *former* Consequence, and what is *now* the natural Tendency of their Designs; and *then* he will excuse me.

What now remains, but that we return to the proper Business of this Day; and, in a deep Humiliation and Contrition for our Sins, beseech Almighty God to be gracious unto us; to our Land; to our *Queen*, and to Her People: That he would defend her Excellent Majesty from the secret Attempts and *open* Violence of her Enemies, by which her Royal Grandfather fell as upon this Day: That he would bless her Person, direct her Counsels, and establish her Throne. That he would moreover confirm and promote the Wisdom and Courage of our Noble Senate; That he would guide their Minds to discern always what is the true Interest of this Church and Nation; and continue their Resolution to pursue it.

SERMON. Above all, Let us Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem *(that they may prosper that love her)*: That

Psal. 122. 6. God would look down in Favour upon Zion, the City of our Solemnities: That our Eyes may once more see Jerusalem a quiet Habitation, a Tabernacle that shall not be taken down; that not one of the Stakes thereof may ever be re-

Is. 33. 20. mov'd, nor any of the Cords thereof be broken: That our Church may be built as a City that is

Psal. 122. 3. as Unity in it self; her Divisions clos'd, and her Distempers heal'd, and her self as firmly establish'd, as the Truth of her Doctrine, and the Justice of her Cause. And that our Sins may not hide these good things from us, by separating between our God and us. Let us return to him with Fasting, and with Weeping, and with Mourning; beseeching him to be merciful to all our Sins, and especially to wipe off the Guilt of Royal Blood from our Church and Nation.

Hear, O Lord, Hear us, and lay not innocent Blood to our Charge, nor Remember our former Iniquities; but spare us for thy Mercy sake, and for the sake of thy Dearly Beloved Son, who died for us, and whose Blood speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Now to him that sitteth upon the Throne, and to the Lamb that was slain for us, and has wash'd us from our Sins in his Blood, together with the Blessed Spirit, be ascrib'd all Praise, Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now and World without end. Amen.

MON [4] 122A
SA
SERM II 3M12
The Nature and Necessity of Religious Resolu-
tion, in the Defence and Support of a Good
Cause, in Times of Danger and Trial.

A
SERMON

Preach'd at the ASSIZES,

And before the

University of OXFORD,

July XIX. 1705.

The Fourth Edition.

PROV. XXIV. 10, 11, 12.

- 10, If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy
strength is small.
11, If thou forbear to deliver them that are
drawn unto death, and those that are ready to
be slain:
12, If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not:
doth not he that pondereth the heart consider
it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he
know it? and shall not he render to every
man according to his works?

THE very Style or Manner, in which
these Words are here deliver'd by the
Wise Man, if we observe it, is some-
what peculiar from the rest of this Book; and ap-
pears plainly to run with more Train and Con-
sequence than is usual in a Course of Proverbs.
And the Reason of it we may justly suppose to
have

SERM. II. have been, the Weight and Importance of the Subject, upon which he was engaged; which might well prevail with him (as *Wise a Man* as he was) to go a little out of his way, to take a nearer View of it; to stand and consider it with more than common Attention, and to draw out and pursue his Reflections on it to a greater length. For 'tis *Courage* and *Resolution* of Mind in Defence, or in Pursuance of our Duty, against, or under, Difficulties, that he makes it his Business in this place to recommend: A Vertue, which, in the Accounts of mere Reason and Nature, stood always in the first Rank, and had the highest Character: And under Christianity 'tis become of so much more especial Use and Necessity, as the Difficulties that lie in the way of our Obedience are liable to be greater, and our Sufferings for it more. Besides that, 'tis not only a main Instance of our Christian Practice in it self, but a Guard and Security to all the rest; of a wide and universal Influence upon our whole Conduct; which reaches through all the Distinctions and Conditions of Men; and very nearly affects them all, as in their general, so in their several and distinct Capacities. Every Man is bound to the Observance of it in a greater or less Proportion: Indeed Men under a publick Character, in a high Station, more particularly so: But at the same time not the *meanest* and *lowest* of the *People* can be wholly exempted from its Obligation: Because a private Vertue can be no more secure without it long, than a publick Trust can be well executed. And since 'tis a Duty thus excellent and necessary in its Nature and

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Consequence, and yet learnt at all times with so much difficulty, and practis'd still with greater, I hope a Discourse on it, in *these Days* at least, will not be thought Unseasonable, nor altogether Impertinent to this Occasion.

I have therefore pitch'd upon these Words of Solomon, because they express the Duty it self, in some of its chiefest Instances, and contain very powerful Engagements to the Practice of it; in that they prescribe against the Breach and Violation of it, with an Authority and Stress very peculiar, with an Application highly serious and affectionate, grounded upon Arguments, and enforc'd with Appeals drawn from Religion and Conscience; *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain: If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not: Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?*

The Sense and Force of which Words may be resolv'd into these plain, easy Propositions: That if our *Courage and Resolution* fail us in a time that most requires it, 'tis good for nothing: If, when a just and good Cause is like to suffer, and stands in need of our Assistance, we then withdraw our selves upon Motives of our own Security and Advantage, or whatever other Reason, and forbear to rescue it from the Malice and Methods of ill Men; *to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain*; Then whatever Pleas and Pretences we may contrive and offer for our selves

SERM. II.

selves, to hide our Baseness from the World; as if we should say, *Behold we knew it not*, we were not aware that the Truth was in so much Danger, or of the Consequences of our Neglect; Yet God sees through the Vanity and Hypocrisy of them all, and will not fail to call Men to a severe Account for such Behaviour; *Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?*

According to this Explication of the Words, and within the Compass of it, I shall proceed in my following Discourse; and since 'tis plain from Solomon, that some sort of *Resolution* in Men may fail, and one need not the Wisdom and Observation of Solomon to convince him in these Days it may do so;

I shall therefore endeavour, in the *First* place, to state the true Nature of *Courage* and *Resolution* in general, and shew upon what Principles it must be form'd, and with what Conditions qualify'd, if ever we design it should stand out against those many Powerful Arguments, that may tempt us to forego it.

Secondly, I shall observe, That Times of Danger and Difficulty, when the Cause of Truth comes to suffer, and, it may be, is ready to sink for want of a Support, are the most proper Season, in which we are to express our *Resolution*, and that, if it then fail, 'twas never real and well grounded: *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small. If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain.*

Thirdly, I shall consider, and try to answer,
 the

the Excuses that Men may possibly make, and have usually done so, for deserting, or not defending a good Cause, when it was certainly their Duty, and within their Power to encourage it: And this from hence, *If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not*: For that these Words were intended by way of an Excuse, and as a Palliation for a base and cowardly Spirit, is plain from their Coherence with the other.

Fourthly and Lastly, by way of Application, I shall draw nearer to the present Design of this Assembly; and, as some have thought, to the more particular Intendment of my Text; and shall crave leave to represent the Necessity there is of a firm *Courage and Resolution* of Mind in those, that are more immediately entrusted with the Administration of Judgment and Justice; as they tender a right Execution of their Charge, and will answer it to God, *the Judge of all men*, at the great Tribunal: *If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain: Doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?*

And, *First*, I shall endeavour to state the true Nature of *Courage and Resolution* in general, and shew upon what Principles it must be form'd, and with what Conditions qualify'd, if ever we design it should stand out against those many powerful Arguments that may tempt us to forego it.

By *Resolution*, here properly taken, we are to understand a firm and steady Purpose of Mind, that a Man forms to himself, to main-
tain

SERM. II. tain and pursue his Duty, what Difficulties soever he may encounter, or whatever Inconveniences he may suffer by it. And the Reasonableness of this is founded upon a plain infallible Truth, That the least Sin whatever is of greater Consequence, and with more Care to be avoided, than the utmost Sufferings of the present Life. So that according to this Account of *Resolution*, we see the Matter, about which it is employ'd, is a point of Duty, something Good or Evil, either in its own Nature, or as enjoin'd by some Law of God or Man: And 'tis clear from hence it is so, because *Resolution*, in the Sense we now consider it, is a moral Duty, improv'd upon Principles of Religion; which must therefore always respect an Object, either Good or Evil. And therefore things altogether indifferent, as excluded from both of these, and partaking of neither, are not the proper Subject of a true *Resolution*. And if a Man propose a Matter of this Nature to himself about which he is left purely free, and not determin'd one way or other, by any Law of God, or Nature, neither immediately, nor by consequence; though he pursue his purpose never so regularly, nor decline ever from it, till he brings it to Effect; we may call this Steadiness, or Constancy in him, if we will; and if the Matter will bear it, he deserves our Praise, and perhaps our Admiration; but surely we cannot properly either call it, or account it to be, the Vertue of *Resolution* in him, because 'tis indeed, strictly speaking, no Vertue at all. Which plainly appears from hence, that a Man is never bound in Conscience, from the

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Reason of the thing it self, or from any Law about it, not to recede from his Purpose in a Matter of this Nature, though by a Sense of his own Honour and Reputation he may be so.

This then is the Nature and Notion of a true Religious *Courage* and *Resolution*, a fixt and immoveable Purpose of acting always according to our Conscience, whatever Temptations may tend to move us from it, or whatever may be the Consequences of our doing so. And how to bring our selves to this Strength and Firmness of Mind, in the regular Pursuit of our Duty, shall be more distinctly consider'd in these following Particulars.

First then, That our *Resolution* may be fix'd and lasting, we are to form it after sufficient Enquires, upon calm and deliberate Reason; after an intimate and thorow Conviction of the Justice and Goodness of our Cause.

And therefore, *Secondly*, We are not to make Passion, or Prejudice, a Respect to Persons, or Parties, but a due Regard to the Nature and Quality of Things, the Ground and Motive of our *Resolution*.

And, *Thirdly*, That our *Resolution* may stand in the Day of Trial, 'tis necessary, that we not only look to the Goodness of our Cause, but to our Selves; That we carefully weigh and estimate our own Strength; That we search out our own Temper and Inclinations; Consider wisely where we are most liable to be assaulted, and what kind of Temptations may take hold of us soonest; and so, by proper Applications before-hand, we are to take care to strengthen what is weak within us, and to guard and secure our Vertue by a wise Presumption of our Enemy.

And

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Gen. 49. 4.

And all this that I have mention'd; must we do in an humble Dependence upon the Grace of God; and out of a just Sense of our Need of his Assistance, without which, when we have done our utmost, we are yet *unstable as Water*; and shall never be able to *excel* to Perfection in any Vertue whatsoever.

And, *First*, That our *Resolution* may hold out always, we are to form it upon sufficient Enquiries into the Matter before us, and to take it up on calm and deliberate Reason, and after an intimate and thorow Conviction of the Justice and Goodness of our Cause.

For all the Force and Firmness a true *Resolution* has within it at any time; it derives from Reason and Conscience; and it proceeds all along in the Execution of it self; in the Strength and Consequence of those Arguments on which 'twas built at first: A Man therefore thinks himself bound to pursue any thing with more or less Steadiness and Application, according to the Opinion he has fram'd to himself of a greater or less Necessity in it: And the Grounds and Measure of a right Opinion lie for the most part Retir'd; and out of Sight, in the Nature and Quality of Things, which must therefore, by a close and deep Reflection, be laid open to our Minds, in order to leave those Impressions there, which may afterwards continue to influence our Practice. *Resolution* therefore in the Will, when 'tis form'd as it should be, must have a strength in it proportionable to the Convictions of our Judgment: 'Tis our Fault and Weakness, indeed, if it have less, and we are accountable for it; but more we are sure it cannot have,

Gen. 49. 4. And all this that I have mention'd; must we do in an humble Dependence upon the Grace of God; and out of a just Sense of our Need of his Assistance, without which, when we have done our utmost, we are yet unstable as Water; and shall never be able to excel to Perfection in any Vertue whatsoever.



as long as it is reasonable: For when once it comes to run beyond Judgment and Evidence, 'tis off from its proper ground, and, so far, is without Reason. A Man therefore that shall purpose any thing to himself, without, or besides Directions from his Reason and Judgment, how stiffly soever he may adhere to his own Choice, and whatsoever he undergo in the Prosecution of it, yet still 'tis not really *Resolution* in him, but *Obstinacy*: For the proper Notion of *Obstinacy* lies in this, in a forceable bending our Wills any way, without, or against the Convictions of our Reason. And whatever the Nature of the Cause it self may happen to be, yet in a Man that shall thus blindly pursue it, it makes no Difference at all, as to the Nature and Quality of his Actions: 'Tis Stubbornness in him even to propose and follow a Right and Vertuous Cause: For tho' there may be never so much Reason for it really, and in the Nature of the Thing it self, yet this Man is able to give none for it, because he has none; but sets his Will rashly to work, without the Information of his Judgment.

The Necessity therefore of a sound and thorow Consideration, e're we resolve in any Cause, would appear sufficiently, were it only from hence, that our *Resolution* might have any Worth and Vertue in it; which it can never have, as I have already prov'd, if we make it in the *dark*; even although we could be sure to stick to it afterwards: But it is not very likely that we will do so, nay 'tis almost impossible we should. For the Foundation being thus shallow, the Superstructure will be

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apt to reel and totter upon every Gust of Temptation. A strong, an present Influence of Good or Evil will be apt to turn the Will any way, because there is nothing to support and keep it right to one side more than another.

Will a Man, think we, care to turn off his present Advantages? Will he put by the warm and vigorous Applications of a mighty Interest just before his Eyes? when it comes attended with such Variety of Graces, and strikes upon him with all the Force of Art without, assisted with the powerful Inclinations of his own Nature within? Will he be able to give it a Repulse? Will he have the Heart to say, *Get thee hence*, when it thus soothes and caresses him? And all this, out of a mere stiff and sullen Humour, because he is resolv'd to stick to a former Purpose, which he has made, he knows not why? Yet this is the very Case of that Man that resolves to be on the side of Truth, which he never examin'd, nor cares to understand!

Again, on the other side, will this Man have the Face to confront the grim Visage of Terrors and Sufferings? Will he be able to bear up against the Discouragement of Power, when it threatens him? When it hangs dark and gloomy over him, and points out to him *below*, the Bones and Carcasses of others, that have thus stood out, and fallen before him? If he can, 'tis more than can be reasonably expected from him, and more than himself can ever justify from his own Condition and Circumstances. For it cannot be deny'd that these, I have mention'd, are real Terrors, and ought to move a wise Man at any time, when
he

he has no stronger Reason to oppose against them; which the Man in the present Case is suppos'd not to have; and therefore how comes he thus to follow his Duty, to inconsistently with himself, and to *commit the Action* of a wise Man upon such a *Foundation* of Ignorance and Folly?

But now an Obligation in point of Conscience, which always arises from an impartial Enquiry into the Nature and Consequences of Things, is stronger than all these Arguments put together, than even the Terrors of *Death* it self; And therefore will be able to carry a Man through with his Duty, whatever may oppose him; and make his *Resolution* hold out against all Importunities of Times and Interests.

I need not here make an Application of this general Discourse to our Selves, and our own Case at present: Every one, that knows any thing of it, is convinc'd of the Justice and Firmness of our *Cause*. And the more he looks into it, the more he will still be satisfied, that his Zeal toward it is highly religious and reasonable; and therefore his *Resolution* to stand by it ought to be perpetual. And here we have reason to bless the good Providence of God, that those Men have always been, and still are, the best Friends of our Church and Constitution, that understand it best, and know the Bottom upon which 'tis founded, and those excellent Advantages with which it is adorn'd. It will stand the Test of our utmost Scrutinies, and does not require a bare and naked Submission to its Doctrine and Discipline, but lays it self open to our Examination,

SERM. II. nation, and invites and enjoins Men not to accept of it, but upon clear and uncontested Evidence.

'Twas an Objection against Primitive Christianity, made by some of the worst Enemies of it, that it render'd all Argument useless, and shut out the Enquiries of Reason into its Articles and Doctrines, and requir'd in its Proselytes a ^b mere *simple* Faith to receive and entertain it. And how do the Fathers of the Church answer this? But by the same Argument which will serve us against our Adversaries; by referring Men to a strict, a close, and impartial Trial of it; by leaving it to their best Judgment to consider it, and then to refuse, or comply with it, according to the clearest Light and Evidence of their own Reason. And do not we desire the very same in all those that have the Skill and Abilities to weigh our Cause? And we are sure the Balance must *then* turn on our side.

^c And those that by their Education and Circumstances are not so well able to examine it themselves, let them trust the Resolutions, and depend upon the Judgment of wiser Men in this Case, as they must necessarily do in many other Matters, that are yet of the

^a Μη ἐξέταζε, ἀλλὰ πείθεσθαι. Origen contra Celsum, lib. 1. p. 8, 9. Edit. Cantab.

^b Οἱ δὲ ἔχοντες καὶ πνεύματι ψαλῆς βεβαιώματα. Irenaeus, lib. 1. p. 29. Edit. Oxon.

^c Εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἀμύχανον, πῶς ἂν διὰ τὰς τοῦ βίου ἀνάγκας, πῶς δὲ καὶ διὰ τὴν αἰσθητικὴν ἀδύνατον, σοφῶς ἐλπίσαι ὅτι τὸ λόγον ἀκρίβηται, &c. Origen contra Cels. *ibid.*

greatest Moment and highest Consequence to them. And 'twill be a sufficient ground for their pious Zeal and *Resolution*, that they have done their best; God and Man will commend them for it, and they shall not fail of their Reward.

But, *Secondly*, We are not to make Passion, or Prejudice, a Respect to Persons or Parties, but a due Regard to the Nature and Quality of Things, the Ground and Motive of our *Resolution*, if we design it should be lasting.

For Passion can never hold always, and it is not fit it should; and then whatsoever is built upon it, must necessarily sink and *tumble* with it: And Prejudice, 'tis to be hop'd, in time will be remov'd, and then what becomes of a *Resolution* that depends upon it? The truth is, 'tis great pity that both, or either of these mean Qualities should ever *seem* to be the Parent of so noble an Off-spring. For that they can never *really* be so, is beyond all question, and will presently appear, if we consider it. A bold and haughty Humour indeed, whetted by Opposition, very often puts on the Face of *Courage* and *Resolution*; but 'tis sure, there is nothing at a greater Distance from it, and 'twill be found so, whenever there is Occasion to prove it. Because those very Arguments, that are most powerful in themselves, and most proper to try the Temper and Complementation of our *Courage*, do, by a sort of

Ἐπεὶ δ' αὖ ἀλλοτρίους ἀνδρείους εἶναι τὰ μέγιστα οἶον οἱ ἐχθρούς, ἢ οἱ ἐνθουσιαζούτους· ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς οὐρανόθεν ἀνδρείου εἶναι· ἐὰν γὰρ αὐτοὶ τὸ μέγιστον ἀφωπεύῃ, ἐκείνη ἐπὶ ἀνδρείοι. Aristot. Mag. Mor. lib. 1. cap. 21.

natural Efficacy, tend to remove, or rebate, the Force and Edge of our Passion and Prejudice, which yet are here suppos'd to be the only Ground and Foundation of our *Courage*. And when the same Engines are busily employ'd, at the same time, to batter the Edifice it self, and to undermine the Foundation upon which it stands, he that does not see what is like to be the Issue, does not deserve to be inform'd.

Thus for Instance, If a fond and foolish Affection to any Cause, or Party, be the only fundamental Principle of our Zeal towards it, the proper and usual Course in such a Case as this, is to countermine the Force of this soft Passion, by the Methods of a contrary Representation: 'Tis only to sour the Blood a little, by laying Terrors before the Fancy; and so to damp the Jollity, and reduce the extravagant Gaiety, of the Spirits. For Terrors and Fondness, with Regard to the same thing, cannot dwell long together in the same Neighbourhood; and therefore the one is a most proper and effectual Remedy for the other. Again, if Anger or Disaffection to *One* Cause, or Body of Men, be the Ground of our Zeal and *Resolution* for *Another*, here must be quite different Measures taken by him that shall attempt it: Affable and Courteous Applications, Insinuations of Favour, and apt Addresses are here to be made use of by Men, in order to soften the Rigour of the Passion, till it comes to bend and ply to their Designs. For, tho' Anger be a *stubborn*

ἡ ἐν ἐννοήσας αἰς ἀμαχίαν τε καὶ ἀνέναντον θυμὸς; ἡ παρρησία, καὶ πᾶσα πρὸς πάντα ἀφοβία τε καὶ ἀνέναντος. Plato, *Polit. lib. 2.* Ἀνέναντος γὰρ ὁ θυμὸς. Aristot. *Eudem. lib. 3. cap. 1.* Pas-

Passion, yet a *soft Tongue*, we know, is able **SERM. II.**
to break it, to take down the Rage and Swel-
ling of it, and to overcome its utmost Violence, *Prov. 25. 15.*
by a gentle Management. So that we see, 'tis
only to play one Passion against another, and
to apply to each by proper Movements, and
you may turn and manage a Man, that has no-
thing else but Passion in his Cause to trust to,
which way you will.

And this the Great Masters of Human Life,
the Men of *Business* and *Knowledge* of the
World, are very sensible of; and therein in-
deed lies the Advantage which they think they
have above other Men. They have nicely
observ'd the Turns, and Variety of Windings
in Human Nature, and imagine they can take
hold of a Man, let him be never so slippery:
And though perhaps they may not understand
the Philosophy of the Passions so well as *Scho-
lars*, nor be able to discourse finely upon the
Seat and Complection of them, of the Springs
from whence they rise, and of the Ways in
which they *should* Move and Act *Regularly*;
yet how they *will* Move and Act in common
Life, these Men know better than we can tell
them; and are found too hard for us many
times, though we stand prepar'd and girt with
the whole strength and defence of our Learning.
'Tis necessary therefore, if these Men at
any time should have more Skill than Honesty,
(which not seldom happens) when they at-
tempt to beat us off our Ground in a Good
Cause, that we should have some other Secu-
rity to guard us, besides what these Men are
so well acquainted with; even the *Armour* and
Defence of a *Good Conscience in the sight of*
D 4 God;

SERMON II. *God*; a Mind well form'd and settled upon Principles of Religion and Reason, and under lively Convictions of its Duty. For, these are such kind of Arguments, as these Men know not how to deal with; they lie quite out of their Way, beyond the Reach of all their *Policy, Cunning and Craftiness, whereby*

Eph. 4. 14. they lie in wait to deceive. But a Man of mere Heat and Passion, in his Cause, these Men despise; and know that, when he has run his Lengths, they shall have him come about at last, and may take him as they please. We see then plainly how our Passions are liable to Betray us; and therefore there is no safe trusting them with our *Resolution*. For this we may depend upon for certain, that as much of Passion, of what kind soever, as goes into the Frame and Constitution of our *Courage* at first, so much more will there be left of Lame-ness and Imperfection in it, when this Passion is once remov'd; and how this may be done we have seen already, and Men of Artifice and Cunning know very well how to do it.

Thirdly, That our *Resolution* may stand in the Day of Trial, 'tis necessary, that we not only look to the Goodness of our Cause, but to our Selves; that we carefully weigh and estimate our own Strength; that we search out our own Temper and Inclinations; and consider Wisely where we are most liable to be Assaulted, and what kind of Temptations may take hold of us soonest; and so by proper Applications before-hand, we are to take care and strengthen what is Weak within us, and to guard and secure our Vertue, by a wise Pre-sumption of our Enemy.

'Tis

'Tis our Saviour's own way of Arguing, and Advice to as many as would come into his Religion, not only to look upon the bright side of it, and to have their Thoughts and Hearts wholly taken up, and intent upon Contemplating the glorious Proposals and Privileges of His Gospel; though these were infinitely Greater than any other: But that Men would do well likewise to consider, on the other hand, what they must resolve to part with, or submit to, in Compliance with their Duty. How much of their present Satisfaction they must often forego, and what severe Dispensations many times they would be bound to accept, in Pursuance of His Religion, in Contradiction to the very Grain of their Natures, their strongest and most deeply rooted Desires. For otherwise, if the former Advantages were only attended to, and a Man would be sure to meet with the latter Evils in the Course of his Obedience; this would be a terrible Surprise to him, apt to make him start and fly from his Purpose, and renounce his Duty, to secure his present Interest and Pleasure. And therefore a Man should sit down calmly, and debate with himself the Arguments, not only for, but against, his present Purpose; wisely compute the Measures of his own Strength, and that of his Enemy; and then proceed, or retreat in time, according to the best Judgment he could make of his own Temper and Condition: Otherwise he would by no means be fit to engage, or persist, in a Design of such a Nature and Consequence as *that*: *If any Man come to me, says our Blessed Lord, and hate not his father, or his mother,*

SERM. II. *mother, and wife, and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot*

be my disciple; that is, unless he be so coolly and indifferently affected towards all these Things, as to be ready to part with them all, whenever they come to stand in Competition

Verf. 27. *with his Duty. And whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.* And then he goes on, and illustrates

V. 31, 32, 33. *his Argument by this just and lively Resemblance: What King going to War against another King, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand; or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

And what our Blessed Saviour here pronounces, of our taking upon us the Profession of Christianity in general, will hold as true of any particular point of Duty, that comes to be the Matter of our Resolution. Unless we prudently cast up with our selves before-hand, what we may gain, or lose by it, either by quitting, or retaining it; and take care to balance the one against the other, to see which way the Scale will turn in point of Reason, it will be impossible, that either we our selves, or any Body else for us, should lay any great Strefs and Dependence upon our Resolution. For a Good Cause is quite a different Thing, when we look upon it in *Idea*, and consider it abstractedly, stript naked of all disadvantageous, and evil Appendages; and when we

come

come actually to *feel* the *Weight* of it, and to find it beset with *Thorns*, and *Perplexities* on every side: We shall *then* have quite different Thoughts about us, quite different Motions and Turnings in our Souls, upon this Occasion; and 'twill put us into an Agony to think, how we shall get through these things, unless we have taken care some time before to enure our Minds to the Apprehension of them.

Our Business therefore is *now*, while we have Time and Leisure before us, ere the *evil days* come, when we can no longer consult, but must execute our *Resolution*, now by *quick* and *lively* Representations upon our Minds, to put our selves sometimes into the Posture, and Condition of suffering Men; to work up our Passions and Affections, if we can, somewhat to the same Pitch and Height, and to give them a turn, and ply like that they will have, when these things come actually to lie before them. And 'tis certain if we do this, we shall be no Losers by it; for we shall not by this means, as some would fear, *anticipate* and *prevent* the Evil of our Sufferings, (because we do not here consider 'em as certain, but as probable) nor shall we make them more troublesome than they need to be, by antedating them; but we shall abate the *Edge* and *Smart* of them when they come, and so be able to act consistently with our best Reason, and Judgment, in the midst of all the Tumult and Hurry of our Passions.

But there is one thing, which I had almost forgot, That 'tis not only the Temptation of Evils and Sufferings, against which we ought to prepare, and arm our selves, in the Defence,
and

SERM. II. and Support of a good Cause; but there is another very powerful one, that, in some Constitutions, is found to prevail more effectually than the former Terrors; by being a *Bait* to draw and allure the Minds of Men to a Compliance, where the former could not drive them. And 'tis the Temptation of Favours and Advantages, which a Man may certainly, or very probably, procure to himself, by going over from his *Duty*. This indeed is a very dangerous, and powerful Temptation in itself, and our *Enemies* know how to apply it to all Advantage, and 'tis found very often more successful than the other. For some Tempers, that will bear up against Trouble and Vexation, will yet bend to Pleasure: *Opposition* will sometimes make a Man Resolute, when *fair* and *soft* Applications to him would break his Force: A *rough* and *boisterous* Storm will put a Man upon his Guard, make him wrap himself Close, and gird his Defence about him: When the gentle Insinuations of Heat, the kinder Influences of *Favour* descending on him, may prevail with him, by Degrees, to lay himself open to take any Impressions, and to be form'd and * soften'd to any Compliances whatsoever.

Not, that I think it a thing unlawful in itself, for a Man to take, and use, the Favours of Ill Men, whatsoever Design they may have in giving them: For they *may* prove Happy

* — * Η κ' πρὸς πᾶσι τοῖς, καὶ ἡδοναῖς, καὶ πῶς δυνάς
θεωρίας καλακίας, αἱ καὶ τῶν σωματικῶν ὁμοειδῶν εἶναι
τὸ θυμὸς μαλαγίται, καὶ οὕτως ποιεῖ πρὸς πάντα
ἐὺμπεπνῆτα. Plato de Leg. lib. prima.

Advantages to Virtue, and Noble Occasions of **SERM. II.**
 commending our Integrity before God, and
 all the World. But if a Man *suspect* his own
 Strength at all, if through the Grace of God,
 and his Experience of himself, he dares not
trust his own *Resolution*, let him *fly* those
 Advantages that may chance to *ruine* him;
shake his Hands from the Gifts of these Men,
 as from *Bribes*, so many dangerous Occa-
 sions that come to rob him of his Honour and
 Honesty.

And, indeed, 'tis enough to make a Man a
 little afraid of himself, to see the Fate of
 others, that have by this means fallen before
 him: Men, that appear'd once to have as much
 Integrity, and Zeal in a good Cause, as any:
 That spoke as Bravely, and acted in Defence
 of it, and perhaps *wrote* for it; and whom all
 Men thought, as they verily might them-
 selves, as far from ever relinquishing it: Yet,
How have these Men, whom Terrors could
 never have mov'd, yielded at last to *Court-*
ship! The* *Jaw-bones of these Lions*, *How* have
 we seen them *fall away like Water*, till they
 could not *speak*! These Noble Champions,
How have they been foil'd in a slippery place
 of Preferment! Till they could no longer *act*
 (as all Men had reason to expect they would
 always) as became Brave Men, in Correspon-
 dence with their former Character, and those
 Assurances they had given the World! But
 they have *tamely*, and *quietly* surrender'd
 themselves up, quite *drain'd* and *dispirited* of
 their ancient Zeal and Vigour, to the *Sway*

* Psalm LVIII. 6.

SERM II. and Management of those, by whom they were
 Advanc'd.

'Tis enough therefore to make us a little jealous of our selves, and to suspect the Force of these Arguments in general, from the Success we find they have had upon others, perhaps once as stout as we may now think our selves. And therefore 'tis not safe for us to enter the Lists, and put our selves to the Test against them, till we have survey'd our selves well, and through God's Assistance dare trust the Strength of our Arms approv'd every way, by Art, as well as Nature: For, if we trust only to the natural Goodness of our Temper and Constitution in this Case, it may perhaps deceive us: In as much as this kind of Arguments does more often indeed, and more effectually prevail upon the best Natures; upon those, that have not usually the *hardiness* to suspect a *design*, where they receive a *kindness*. A Man had need of a little *roughness*, and even *surliness* in his Complexion, to have his Breast guarded with *Brass and Iron*, to keep out the Insinuations of * Flattery: 'Tis a Poison that works so strongly upon our Self-love, that we take it in greedily, and swallow it without Suspicion, and will not be perswaded we are at all Sick by it, till every Body else sees we are past Recovery.

So that, if we would have our *Resolution* prevail above all these numerous and mighty Temptations, it must be our Care to know

* Οἷον, καὶ λαλῶ, θανάθ' ὀφείλω, καὶ βλάβη μεγάλη, ὅμως ἐπιμύξεν ἡ φροσύνη ἡδονὴν πᾶσα ἐν ἀμύμον. Πλάτῳ ἐν Phædro.

our selves well; to place Guards and Fences SERMON II
about our Hearts; to prop up and support
what is weak, and insufficient within us; And
to secure all the *avenues* of our Souls that lie
open, and are liable to be assaulted any way,
either by *Storm*, or by more gentle *Approaches*.
And if we do this carefully now, 'tis sure we
shall find Occasion to applaud our selves *here*
after; we shall find in the Day of Trial we
have acted wisely, and that our *Courage*, like
a true *Friend*, will then stand by us, when we
have most need of its Assistance. Which
brings me to

The *Second* Thing I propos'd to observe
from my Text, That Times of Danger and
Difficulty, when the Cause of Truth is like
to suffer, and stands in need of a Support, are
the proper Season, wherein we are to express
our *Resolution*, and that, if it then fail, it was
never real, and well grounded; never well
prepar'd, and establish'd, according to the Di-
rections I have already given.

For the proper Perfections of every Thing
is to attain its end; and if our *Resolution* fall
short of this, whatever we may pretend, *Wise*
Men will easily see through it, and be sure to
lay the Fault, where it ought to be, in its
proper Place. If we say, we design'd always
well, but were over-born by the Violence of a
present Temptation to leave our Purpose;
What do we? But really own, in the Nature
of the thing it self, and in the true Mean-
ing of our own Excuse, that our Purpose
was never *perfect*, as it should have been,
at first, and but half form'd in the *Beginning*.

• For

SERM. II.

For we ought to have foreseen our Danger, if we had been truly Valiant; the very Notion of *Resolution* and Fortitude implying, and requiring a sufficient Apprehension of the Evils we may chance to suffer in the Prosecution of it: But the Man, that does not at all consider into what Consequences he runs himself by his Designs, we may term him *Rash*, but not *Resolute*; ^b *Bold*, but not *Courageous*. To satisfy the World therefore, that ever we resolv'd and design'd well, let us act so, when ever the Times, and State of Affairs demand it of us.

But *here*, when we mention the Danger and Difficulty of Times, should we do this with a particular Reference, and Direction to our *own*, perhaps we might offend: Some Men would, in their great Gravity, tell us, that surely we are much to blame for busying our selves about such Things as these, and which do not belong to us; and perhaps, by a wrong Application, quote the Words of *Solomon* upon us to this Purpose: 'Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not enquire wisely concerning this. We are out of Humour, they say, and want *Preferment*, and that makes us complain of

Eccles. 7. 10.

^a Οἱ γὰρ ἀπαιροῦσι τὸ ἐκ κατασκευῆς τὸ φερόμενον διὰ τὴν ἀπειρίαν· ἐν δὲ τῇ ἐν τῷ παλιῷ ἀνδρείᾳ. Arist. Mag. Mor. lib. 1. cap. 21.

^b Οὐ γὰρ ἡ ἀλάρης ἔργα ἀνδρείᾳ καλῶ ἔτε θηρία, ἔτε ἀλλο ἐν τῷ τῷ δυνάμιτι ἀνολίας μὴ φερόμενον, ἐλλ' ἀφαιρῶν κ' ἡμῶν. Plato in Lachete.

^c Ταῦτα ἐν αὐτῇ καλεῖται ἀνδρείᾳ, καὶ πολλοὶ, ἐργάται καλῶ ἀνδρείᾳ τὴν φερόμενα. Plato ibid.

the

'the Times; and 'tis our *Forwardness*, and *Folly* that we do so. 'Tis not some Men's Wisdom, we grant it, to Complain of any, because 'tis their *Interest* to Comply with all. But how do we not *wisely* to complain, if we have *Reason* for it? And whether we have not Reason sufficient in *these evil Days*, I appeal to all Men, besides our Enemies, all the *wise Men* of the Nation, and the common Sense of *honest Men*.

What *Solomon* then design'd by these Words, * If they must at all relate to *Politicks*, was this, that we should not Complain without Reason; not to be querulous, and uneasy under Government, when the Advantages of the Times, in which we live, are great, and the Inconveniences but little and common, such as are almost necessary, and can hardly be avoided at any time: For that this is indeed unreasonable, and an Argument of a restless and seditious Spirit: But, surely, *Solomon* could never intend, by these Words, to exclude a just, and reasonable Complaint of the Times, unless we'll make his *Wisdom* contradict the Rules of *common Sense* and *Prudence*. For it may be our Duty to complain, and to appeal against the Corruptions of the World, and of these *Men* more especially, in order to prevent the farther Growth of Evil.

And then as for *Preferment*, whatever we may think of it, or they of us; we hope however, no Proposals, or Expectations of *Preferment* will take us off from our *Honour*, and *Conscience*, how little soever some Men may

* For there is no Necessity they should; See Pool's Synopsis on this Place.

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seem to have, that do enjoy it. But surely one would have thought these wise Men had known the way to *Preferment* in these Days, a little better; and that 'tis not to *complain* (as I hinted before) but to *comply*: Can they think us then so foolish, that we would take so very ungracious a Method to disappoint ourselves of it, as this? Upon these Grounds then we may hope for these good Men's Excuse, if we do *complain* a little; and they may *well bear with us*, since they make their own Advantage so much by *that*, which is the Ground of our *Complaint*.

But let them know, that 'tis not *Interest*, and *Preferment*, but *Religion* and *Conscience*, that oblige us to behave our selves *thus*; and to stand up in *Defence* of our *Holy Church*, and *Constitution*, against the ill Effects of their Principles, and Practice. Were it only our own Ease, and Advantage we consulted, we could fairly sit still as well as others; and though with less Satisfaction to our own Consciences, yet we know, with the *better Opinion* of these Men: Or we could run in with the *Stream* of the Times, and be carried *smoothly* down by it, till we should be thrown, one time or other, upon a Condition, surely more Reconcilable with our *Ease* at least, than these *wearisome Contests* are: But we *believe*, and *therefore* we *speak*. We are vainly persuaded in our Selves, that our Church, and Holy Religion are the best constituted, to all Purposes of true Piety, of any in the World; most agreeable to the Purity of Christ, and the best Patterns of the primitive Ages; and 'tis *this* that makes us so much concern'd, and
so

to very apprehensive of Danger, from the Designs of ill Men, that plainly appear to threaten them. And God forbid their Malice should out-live our Zeal, or that we should ever approve, or not protest against those Methods, that are every Day taken to undermine our Peace!

And since I am led so near to it, I shall crave leave, in this *Venerable Audience*, to take off the Malignity of an *ill-natur'd Reflection*, that has been made upon us of this Body, more particularly, by a sort of Men, that, by other Instances, as well as this, appear to have no great Kindness for our *Profession* in general. 'We are a *fond and humorous* People, they say, of *narrow and contracted* Spirits; *quickly pleas'd, and easily offended*: 'We are presently flush'd with a little Prospect of Advantage in the Government; and our Discourse, and our Expectations run high; 'But if every thing be not carried exactly to our Humour, we turn *sullen* immediately, and *mutinous*; and don't stick to quarrel at the *Government*, and censure its Proceedings. It may be hop'd, that those that know us better, have entertain'd no such disadvantageous Opinion of us, nor found *amongst us* any such *Behaviour*: As we our selves are not sensible of any such, and are sure, if there be, 'tis what by the Doctrines, and Principles of our *own Church* (which yet we may be suppos'd to know and believe, as much as others) we must for ever discountenance and disapprove. But if there should chance to have been such at any Time; we hope only for *common Candour*, and *Charity* from the World, in this Case, and

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that the Misbehaviour, and Imprudence of a few, will not be charg'd upon our whole Body; when what they do is against the general Consent.

As for our being so quickly touch'd with Good or Evil, that affects our Church, and our being so soon rais'd or sunk upon it; 'tis not from our own particular Hopes, or Fears of finding our own Account in it, or not; but 'tis from an exquisite and lively Sense we have of the common Interest of Religion, above what may be well presum'd in the Generality of Men, whose Business lies more involv'd in secular Affairs. 'Tis ours chiefly to have our Eyes always awake, and open for the Preservation of our excellent Religion; and therefore we are so very apprehensive of all Occurrences that concern it; because he that touches *that, touches the Apple of our Eye*, the most sensible, and tender part about us.

But as for what these Men say of our Quarrelling at, and Censuring, the Government, we answer; if they mean by the Government, all those that are entrusted with any Share of the Administration, we may hope in this Case to be excus'd, as well as the rest of the World, if we do not think our selves bound in Honour and Conscience to approve what every one of them shall propose and execute: though for their Office sake, and for our Conscience sake, we are, and ought to be, tender of their Character.

But if they mean by the Government, Her Majesty's sacred Person; Far be their Accusation from us! Let it be turn'd against Her Enemies, and those that hate us! May Her Name and Person be for ever highly honour'd amongst

us!

us! Is it possible *She* should ever be the Mark of SERMON II.
our Dislike, or our Reflection? *She* that was
the only Stay of our Hopes in the worst of
Times, and our main Dependence, and Ex-
pectation in these: Under *whose shadow* we
always said we should have rest; and shall be sure
to find it once, howsoever the present Intricacy,
and Perplexity of Affairs may disturb Her
Reign. For surely, that native Goodness and
Excellency of Temper, improv'd upon the best
Principles and Education; That firm Zeal for
the Honour of God and Religion, express'd so
often, by Her Suffering, and Acting for it:
Those many serious, and affectionate Professi-
ons of Her Tenderness to this Church, and
Her declar'd Resolutions to support, and en-
courage the best Members of it, can never be
long without the most glorious and happy
Fruits: *In time* they must break through all
those Disadvantages that surround, and attend
Her at present, and discover themselves, to the
Triumph, and Glory of our Church, and Holy
Religion, to the Disappointment of our Ene-
mies Designs, and to the Confusion of their
Faces. However, if the *Church of England* must
always wear the proper Badge of Her *Blessed*
Saviour; be always suffering, always conflict-
ing, with Her Enemies; Let Her still be for
ever Untainted in Her Loyalty; Let us cut off
this Occasion of boasting from our Enemies,
who wait for our *Halting*, and would be glad
to spread some of their own Shame upon us;
Let us not be remov'd from our Principles, by
any Changes in our Condition; Let us hold fast
our Integrity as long as we live, and 'twill be our
Glory after Death.

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We know then of no Reflection made upon Her Majesty's Government by us: if there be any, 'tis what *these Men themselves* have made, who can have the Impudence to give out, or even suppose, so very bad a Cause, as their own, to be countenanc'd by Her Favour and Authority.

When 'tis *once* come to this, Is it not Time for us to awake, and begin to bestir our selves? Can we think our selves *secure*, whilst these Men are so *active*? 'Tis a sign they draw pretty near their *Point*, when their *Motion* grows so *violent*. And if, upon the late *insolent De-meanour* of these Men, our *Fears* begin to rise a little, can they blame us? when both *they*, and we know Nothing but our very *Raine* will give them an entire Satisfaction.

If *Kindness* would do them any Good, if 'twould make them the *better Men*, or the *better Subjects*, we should not be so much concern'd about it? But when the *Snake*, from being cherish'd, only gathers Life, and Strength to hiss, and sting the more; when they become only the more *Enrag'd* and *Extravagant*, and *Mad*, under the Sense of a *present* Advantage, or within the Prospect of a *future*, Are these Men fit to be *encourag'd*? They may Complement and Address the Government, under which they live, 'tis true, for any Favours, which they either have, or falsely presume themselves to have, from it; But let not the *Government* ever think it self the more secure for this, any longer, than 'tis not in these Men's Power to overturn it; nor when it is, must any *Prince* upon the *Throne* of *England* expect a kinder Treatment from them, than the *Best* of *Kings* has met with.

This

This they perhaps may say is *Railing*, the *Over-flowings* of our *Gall*, and *Bitterness* of *Spirit*; no more than what they might expect to hear from Men of our *Character*, and especially in this *Place*. It may be so, But is it not true? Do we charge them falsely in this point? Have we not seen all this exemplified in former Experience? And do we not find things tend to the very same at present? *How** did they deal with that *merciful* Prince, King *Charles the First*? *How* did they multiply their insolent Demands upon him, one after another, till they had extorted from him, and driven him out of all, that he could possibly grant, even all, that he had, but his God and his Conscience! And these he must have parted with too, if he would have gone any farther with them: And were they ever the more pleas'd with him, ever the more obedient to him for all this? Were they ever satisfied till they had his very *Life* and *Blood*? May that Day's Action never be forgotten! Never be blotted out of the *Records* of Time, what ever some Men may desire! May it always be remember'd, to the Shame, and everlasting Reproach of these Men! And to teach us and our *Posterity*, the *Children of the Generations to come*, what we must expect hereafter, if ever the Justice of God, for the Sins of this Nation, should suffer the Hand of these Men to prevail again.

How much we owe for our present Security from the Designs of these ill Men, to the *Courage* and *Resolution* of our brave *English Gentlemen*,

* See this sufficiently made out, once for all, from their Proceedings with the King in the Treaty in the Isle of Wight. *Ld. Clarendon, 3d Part, Book XI. Page 160, &c.*

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we can only think in Silence. 'Tis not in our Power by all the *Eloquence*, this *ancient Seat of Learning* abounds with, to make You an Acknowledgment equal to the Zeal and Industry You have *more, especially* shewn of late, towards the Defence and Preservation of this excellent Church and Constitution, against *Your Enemies, and Ours*. May God and Your own Honour and Conscience be Your Reward! May You live to see the Fruits of Your own *brave Actions, and generous Endeavours*. May the Church and State always flourish as You desire! May the *blessings of peace and prosperity* rest upon your head! while Your *enemies are cloth'd with shame and confusion*, and while all *those that have evil will at Zion, become as grass wither'd afore it be grown up*; all their Designs *blasted, and fruitless*; and themselves the *Scorn and Contempt of the present, and the Abhorrence of future Generations*.

Psal. 129. 5. 6.

I shall now go on to consider Persons of a very different Character from these *noble Patriots*; and shall endeavour,

Thirdly, To examine, and answer, the Excuses Men may possibly make, and have usually done so, for *deserting, or not defending* a good Cause, when 'tis certainly their *Duty*, and within their *Power* to encourage it.

And here, *First*, some Men perhaps may think it enough to say for themselves, after all their shifting, and changing sides, and leaving a good Cause, and their old Friends, that they do it upon good Reason, and better Informations? That they were once indeed mistaken, 'as many an *honest Man* may be, and acted then 'in Pursuance of that Mistake: but *since*, they 'have

'have with more Care examin'd the Matter, and are now come to be of a different Opinion; and have accordingly taken up other Resolutions; and hope all the World will excuse them for it, since, they assure us, they have done nothing in this Case, but upon very weighty, and sufficient Arguments.

What kind of Arguments these Gentlemen may possibly have met with, we cannot so well tell, but, we know, some are very enlightening. And perhaps it may not be so very difficult to trace the Steps, and Methods of their Conversion, if we look a little nearer into the Change of their Condition. However, do they think their own bare Word enough for us to depend upon in this Case, that they have good Reason for their Change? when all the wise and honest Men in the World are sure themselves have, and are every Day able to give, such innumerable Reasons to the contrary! 'Tis true, a Man may be allow'd to change his Opinion at any time, upon good Reason; and no length of Days, no Multitudes, nor Authority of Men ought to prescribe against the Truth. But, surely, when a Man goes off from the general and concurrent Opinion of Men as wise, or, as he may modestly presume, something wiser than himself, there is so much Respect and Reverence due to the common Sense of Men, as that he should endeavour to give the World some reasonable Satisfaction for it. Yet we can instance in some Men, and those no very inconsiderable ones, that, we are sure by comparing their former Writings, and their present Practice, have, within the compass of a few Years, very much alter'd their Opinions. But they have

SERMON II have never done us the *Favour* and *Civility*, all this while, to let us know, upon what Grounds; and, if we ask it of them at any time, we receive indeed *Passion* enough, but no *Reason*, for our Answer. They are displeas'd and angry with us, that we will not believe, and act as they do, when they won't let us know how they *could* ever come to do so *themselves*, and we can't imagine how any *wise* or *good* Men ever *should*.

If a Man then will be *changing* at any time from a *Cause* that has, at least, the highest *Presumption* of Truth on its side, and that, for a long Course of Time, has carry'd off the Approbation, and Judgment of the greater Part, and those the wisest Men, to another, That for the *main*, is only cried up in the *Assembly of Fools*, applauded by the Suffrages of vain and idle, weak and vicious Men; If he designs to escape the Shame and Censure of the World in this Case, let him be able and ready to shew his Reasons for his Change, and we will hear them. But merely for him to say, that he has such Reasons to himself, is not sufficient; *especially* at a *time*, when he cannot but know, his Veracity lies justly under a strong Suspicion, upon the account of his very *Change*. We would fain then know, what these Men have to say for *themselves*, and *against* our *Cause* at present; If they have any *Arguments*, let them produce them; Let them bring out their *strong Reasons*, that we may *know* them; And if we cannot chuse out a Man amongst us that shall be able to answer and overcome them, we will promise to go over, and serve their Cause; but if we *can*, and we don't question it, we expect, and that *justly*, they should

should return to us: Otherwise, let them be contented to take the Consequence, as to what the World will be apt to say, or think of them upon this account; and that, upon very good Reason, much better, we may suppose, than any they have to plead for themselves.

This then is our Reply to those Men that have quite *deserted* us; *gone off totally* from us; upon *Principles*, as they pretend, but really because *they were never of us*: for if they had been truly of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us.

1 Joh. 2. 19.

But there are others, *Secondly*, That, though they do not quite *fall off*, and utterly renounce a good Cause, yet think it less necessary to stir much in it, because they are not aware, they say, the Truth is in so much Danger, as we would seem to make it.

How long will it be ere these Men come to awake and apprehend how near they are undone? If we are *safe*, as these Men would fain persuade us, and our worst Enemies would have us believe at any Purchase; What means then all this Noise and Stir of late to insult us? All those indirect, and illegal Methods to oppose, and undermine us? Those many villanous Practices to *serve* a Cause, which no Pretence can ever justify, nor any Law of God or Man excuse? He that does not see all this, and plainly perceive to what it tends, is *willingly ignorant*, and may justly be suspected of a Party with our Enemies, whose Designs he would endeavour thus to *screen* from our Suspicion: Or a fatal Slumber has seiz'd his Spirits, and he sleeps upon the *Beach*, till a *Wave* roll in upon him, and take him away for ever.

AN ASSIZESERMON

SERM. II.

I shall not enter any farther into Particulars, nor will your Patience bear it; But, surely our Case at present is *such*, that if there was ever a Time, that call'd for our Zeal and Activity, 'tis *now*; and we are false to our God, to our own *Conscience*, and to our excellent *Constitution*, if we don't employ our *utmost*; if we don't think our selves concern'd to avoid a *Ruine* that *threatens* us at our very *Doors*, and is ready to come in at our *Windows*. Let us make our *enemies themselves our judges* in this Case: would they, think we, appear so very much exalted? Would they rejoyce, and triumph at *this rate*; if they did not take themselves to have a great Advantage over us? And did not yet expect a *greater*? And can they have *any long*, without our *Ruine*? If we don't know when 'tis time for us to *arise*, and take care of our selves, they know how to make use of our *Supineness*, and will shake the *Rod* of *Slumber* over our Heads, till the *Ship*, in which all our Hopes, and Happiness are *embargu'd*, crack under us; till the Frame of our *Constitution dissolve*, and we are plung'd in irrecoverable Ruine.

But we have Men of *tender*, and *charitable* Spirits amongst us, (as they would be thought) Men of sweet, gentle, and pacific Natures! That can't bear so much as a *just*, and *severe* Reflection, though it be upon a *generation of vipers*, a *Race of Villains*! And though it be never so necessary to make us aware of them, and take care, they don't stab us to the Heart.

In God's Name, does not *Charity* begin at home? Are we bound to be *charitable* to our
De.

Destruction? Must we never think Men can have ill Designs upon us, till we are ruin'd by them? Is there any such *Charity* due to a vicious, lewd, profligate, factious Combination of Men? That appear to have no other Concern, what becomes of our Government, than to make their own base Ends by it: nor about Religion, any farther, than as 'twill serve, as an *Engine* of their own Designs; and, in the mean time, by the Malignity of their own vile Example, endeavour to break the very *Heart* and *Power* of it, and, as much as they can, to *erase* the very Notions of it out of the Minds of Men, by their loose practising, or countenancing Hypocrisy? What *Charity* can be due to such Men as these, unless it be to oppose them as much as *possibly* we are able, and to hinder 'em from *doing* all the *Mischief* they intend? This indeed is properly our *Charity* towards them; and to Pray to God, for *their* Sake, and ours, that he would *confound* their Designs, and *convert* their Hearts: But to soothe, and encourage them in their ill Practices by our Silence; and not to protest against them, in the *Name* of God and *Religion*: but to *gloze* 'em with Lies, and to speak *smooth* things to them, and to *have* their persons in admiration because of our own advantage; is this our *Charity*? 'Tis our *Sin* and *Folly*, indeed, and we shall find it so hereafter, when God shall call us to a severe Account, for contributing so much to the Corruption of the Age we live in.

Jude 16.

Again, *Thirdly*, Men will urge, as a *Cloak* for their own Fears, and want of *Courage*, that they like the *Cause* well enough, in which we are engag'd, but don't altogether so well approve our *Methods* of pursuing it. 'Tis

'Tis really Matter of our great Concern, that *wise and good Men*, who have shewn their Zeal for Truth so often, and are ready, *we don't doubt*, to do so always, should ever fall under a Suspicion that does not belong to them, by dissenting from their Brethren upon *Scruples* of this Nature. If the Cause be necessary, and the Means be lawful, and, more than that, esteem'd probable likewise, in the Opinions of *wise and good Men*, upon whom we may depend at any time: Why should we endanger the *End* it self, when 'tis of such mighty Consequence to our Happiness, by our little Differences about the *Means*, which are of no Value, but what they derive from their Fitness to serve the *End*? However, we must not condemn every Man for a *Deserter*, that does not always fall in exactly with our *Opinion*: when he has ever given *before*, and is prepar'd to give *again*, the highest Evidence of his Truth and *Honesty*. 'Tis the *unhappiness sometimes*, and not *always* the *fault*, of good Men, that they cannot come up to a perfect Harmony in Judgment: And we must in Christian Candour and Charity, spare those Men, whom we know to be our Friends by other Arguments, though they may not *always* entirely consent to our *Opinions*, how good soever. *Time* and *Reflection* may rectify those Mistakes, which were *innocent* at first; and unite us all in the same pursuit, by the same Means to the same blessed End and Consequence, the firm *Security* of our *Holy Church*, and the perpetual *Establishment* of our *Peace*.

But *Fools* and *Knaves* make use of this Pretence upon quite other Grounds; to conceal their

their own *base Fears*, and *Nakedness*, or to *disappoint* the End it self, by a *counterfeit Rejection* of the Means. Thus, for Instance, These *good Men* tell us, 'That we are quite *mistaken* in the present Controversy between them and us about our *Church*: They love the *Church*, they say, as well as we, and are as much concern'd for its *Establishment*; but they don't think, we take the readiest way to preserve it; and therefore they propose and follow a much better, if we will believe them: which is not by *Heats* and *perverse Disputings*, by *zealous Contentions* and *fierce Strugglings*, against the *Enemies of Truth*: but by the *milder Methods* of *Kindness* and *Moderation*; by the gentle Influences of a *healing Spirit*, to soften the *perverse*, and *harsh Tempers* of *Men*; to *smooth* the *rugged Humours*, and to *allay* those *intemperate Heats*, and *Heart-burning* amongst *Brethren*; and so to make up the *Breaches* of our *Peace*, by the *Cement* of a *Christian Compliance* and *Charity*. But do they think to impose upon us still, by all this *Cant*, this idle *Harangue* of Words, which we have answer'd over and over? *Christian Charity* and *Moderation* are *excellent* Things in their true Name, and Notion, we grant it; and God forbid we should deny it: But surely, they are such *Qualities*, that if we may guess any Thing by these *Men's Behaviour*, they *have not the least Part nor Share* in themselves; nor would be concern'd that *others should*, unless 'twere to serve their own bad Ends the better by it. The Truth is, they are afraid of appearing against a *Party*, which they have such a *Liking* for, and which they find so very

Power-

SERM. II. Powerful, and so many Ways able to do them Good or Hurt, to raise or sink, to prefer or *keep them under*; and this is the *true Reason*, that they will not venture to disoblige them, even because of their own *base Hopes and Fears*. And since they can't for Shame of the World, openly *renounce* their Church, they are for rendring all Means and Methods to maintain and preserve it, as *ineffectual* as possible; So to gratify their own good *Friends*, and our worst *Enemies*, the more. And 'tis certain they are the better able to serve these Men's Designs upon us, whilst they continue in the *Bosom* of our Church, than out of it; because they can by this Means find a Place, wherein to *stab* it more *effectually*, and so carry off the greater Renown and richer Spoils by doing so.

But what *Methods* are they *after all*, by which we endeavour to support our Church, which these Men can't find in their Hearts to approve of, and comply with? I have not time to reckon up particulars; but I appeal to the Sense of every Man, whether they are not such, as, if we could succeed in them, would *only* put it beyond these Men's Power to do us any further *Mischief*: and that is the *true Reason*, indeed, they are offended with us, and there lies the real Ground of their Complaint.

I shall mention but one *Refuge* more, behind which Men seek to hide their Want of *Courage*, and *Resolution* in a good Cause; and that is,

Fourthly, That 'tis to no *Purpose* for them to appear in it; they can do but little Good, for their own Part, they say, towards the Promoting it; and therefore they think it enough for them to *Wish* it well, and so throw up all further

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their Concern about it, by an idle *Reliance* upon *SER M. 11*
other Men, that are better able to provide for
us Success.

And if it *does* happen to succeed, through the
Blessing of God, and *other Men's* faithful Care
and Pains, no Thanks however to these good
Men for it: They may share indeed in the *pre-*
sent Benefits, and enjoy themselves at the Ex-
pence of other Men's Sweat and Blood, *Men*
much better than themselves; but let them not
expect any Share of the Reward *hereafter* for
Well-doing, which shall be given only to the
good and faithful Servant.

But if the slender Hopes of Success, which
these Men offer as a *Pretence* for themselves,
were never so *True*; Is it any *Reason* for us to
neglect the least part, or instance of our Duty?
Why do we not then renounce our *Orders*?
Why do we not throw up our *Ministry*? Why
do we take this Pains to *Preach* to Men, and to
press upon them their Duty at all times, *in*
Season, and *out of Season*? When we find we can
do so little Good by it, *after all*, and have no
more Thanks at last for all our Pains; but, it
may be, are *persecuted* and *hated* for it; or at
least *discountenanc'd*, and that by *those Men* too,
from *whom*, considering the *Character* they bear
amongst us, and their near *Relation* to our
Order, we might expect another kind of
Treatment.

But howsoever Men may deal with us, let
us not be *weary* nor *faint* in our minds: Our Re-
ward is *sure* to us, though it be not *present*:
In the mean time, Are the *Satisfactions* of a
good Conscience Nothing with us? The *bright*
and *cheerful* Reflections that we have done our
Duty,

SERM. II Duty, and answer'd the Trust repos'd in us by God, and our *Superiors*, according to the Rank and Order in which the *Providence* of God has plac'd us? Every Man is able to contribute something towards the common Good of his *Country*, and the Support of his *Religion*; either by his own faithful Endeavours, or by his Advice and Encouragement, or at least by his Prayers; which, if he can do no more, God will accept of, and reward as much as all the rest: but if he can, and will not, his Prayers are *Hypocrisy*, his *Dependence* is *Vain*, and his *End* will be *Disappointment*. Let every Man then do the best he can, and leave the *Success* of all to God; And *then* whatsoever may be the *Issue*, 'twill not be so much his *Trouble*, because 'twas not his *Fault*.

How great Evils are coming upon us, what times of Suffering the Providence of God may have reserv'd us for, He knows best in his own infinite Wisdom. But, surely, we ought in Prudence to lay in the best *Supports* we are able, the best Stock of Comforts we can get together, against a *time*, when all will be *little enough* to sustain, and bear up our Spirits. But *now*, if it be through our own Negligence and Inadvertence, that we come to suffer, we, by this means, deprive our selves of one of the main *Pillars* of our *Support* in *Trouble*, and shall be ready to bite our *Tongues* with Anguish, and vexation of spirit, in the Day we come to feel the Evils, which, but for our own stupid Folly, might have been once prevented. If God smite

Jonah. 4. the gourd, that he has brought over us for our
7, &c. comfort, because we would not labour for it, nor
be at the pains to make it grow; how shall we
be

be able to answer him, unless it be in such peevish Language, as *that* of his *angry Prophet*; which will be a fresh Aggravation of our Misery, and a new Enhancement of our Guilt.

And thus I have endeavour'd to consider the *Excuses*; that are most usual with Men in this Case, and to answer them by Arguments proper and peculiar to every one.

But there is one, besides all these, more general yet, and which reaches 'em all together, and which the *Wisdom* of God in *Solomon* makes use of in the *Text*, drawn from the Consideration, How little these vain Excuses will avail us in the Presence of *Almighty God*, when he comes to take Account of all our Actions: *If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not: Dost not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, dost not he know it? and shall not be render to every man according to his works?*

Does not he count all the *Wanderings* of our Steps, be they never so secret? Observe and weigh every *Prevarication* of our Spirits? Sound our *Corruptions* to the very *Root* of them? See through the *Frame* and *Temper* of every one of our Souls? Take *special Notice* upon what *Principles* we begin to move at any time, how we go on, and what *Ends* we drive at? And will not he deal with us according to his own *infallible Knowledge*, and not our *vain* and *hypocritical Pretences*? To what Purpose is it then for us to walk in the *Dark* for a little while, and to impose upon our selves, and the rest of the World, for a few Days, and by shuffling, and tricking with God, and our own Consciences, in the mean time, to betray

SERM. II. our Cause, and our Selves, to utter Ruine?
 When the Time is hastening upon us all, and

not far off from any one of us; when all these false Colours shall surely fade, all these formal Disguises be taken off, and both our Actions and Principles pass under a severe Trial, and our whole Behaviour be scann'd and sifted to

Pr. 13. 5. the bottom! How loathsome shall we then appear, in that day, when the Hand of Justice shall dragg us out of all our holes, and lurking places, into the Presence of the Great God, and his Holy Angels, with all our Baseness, and Corruptions about us! We, that cannot now bear a little Shame of the World, and of Men our Fellow-servants, and therefore seek thus to make

Is. 28. 15. Hypocrisy our Covering, and Lies our Refuge: How shall we be blank'd and confounded, in that Day, to see all our close and wicked Intrigues, all our Deeds of Darkness, brought out into the full Splendor of heavenly Lights, and before the whole Universe of Creatures! How much therefore does it concern us all, and of what infinite Consequence is it to every one of us, that we take care to behave our selves uprightly in all our Ways: without Guile and Hypocrisy; with all Openness, Sincerity and Truth; as in the Presence of our Great Judge, and Searcher of all our Hearts! That, when He shall approve, and acquit us in the Last Day, whatever we may have suffer'd, in the mean time, from the Hands of Men, for a good Cause, either in our Name, or Interest, or otherwise; we may then have the everlasting Praise, and Approbation of the whole World. But if He shall finally condemn us, whatever vain Applauses we may now give our selves, for our indirect Dealings,
 or

or receive from the vain World about us; we shall then, to our eternal Shame, be exploded and hiss'd off the Stage for ever. SERM. II.

Will it be *then* any Satisfaction to the Wisdom and Justice of our Judge, or any Comfort to our selves, when we have betray'd our Duty, and suffer'd Innocence, or a just and upright Cause, to sink under Injury and Oppression, for want of putting to our Hand, for its Deliverance and Rescue, for us to say *slightly* and *vainly*, before God and the Holy Angels, *that it was an error, Behold we knew it not, non putâram*, the Refuge of *Fools*, in whom *be has no pleasure*? When Men have destroy'd Themselves, their Church, and Country, by their *treacherous Dealing*; and have ruin'd one of the best Constitutions in the World, by their Coldness, and want of Zeal, not to say by worse Methods; What will they be able to answer for themselves! How will they *hold up* their *Faces* to God and us, in the Day of their own, and our Calamity! Will they plead *Ignorance* as their Excuse? Will they say, *Behold, we knew it not*; that they were not *aware* of it; that they could never have *imagin'd* once, Things would have come to this; and that they are now *sorry* for it? But have we not often *forewarn'd* them of the Danger of these Things! Have we not plainly *foreshewn* them, what would be the *Consequence*; *told 'em over, and over, what would come of it*, and they would not hear us!

I shall make no Reflections upon any body, but I pray God all those, that *have the Rule over us*, and by God's Providence are appointed the Watch-men over our *Holy Church*, and should

SERMON II. should always stand upon her *Towers of Defence*, would in due time lay this to heart; *Psalm 48. 12.* Left by too forward and easy Compliances, by vain Proposals and Overtures of *Reconciliation*, they admit an Enemy within the *Gates of Zion*, which afterwards will be beyond their Power to drive out, or to controul; An Enemy, that shall enter into her *Sanctuaries*, break down all the carved work thereof with axes and hammers, and defile her holy places to the ground: with rude and unhallow'd Hands, utterly despoil our Church of all its excellent Ornaments, and beauty of Holiness; and those, that preside over it, themselves, of all their Power, Honour, and Authority, which Christ has given them, for edification, but not for our destruction.

Psalm 37. 2.

Psalm 74. 6, 7.

Psalm 110. 3.

2 Cor. 10. 8.

I shall now crave your Patience a moment longer, only just to mention the Necessity there is of a firm *Courage* and *Resolution* of Mind in those, that are intrusted, more especially, with the *Administration* of *Judgment*, and *Justice*: I shall do it in as few words as possible, that I may not seem to give Advice to my *Superiors*.

For, *My Lords*, I would not presume to question the *publick Wisdom*, by which You are appointed to this *High* and *Honourable* Office. And when we take upon us, at any time, to speak these things before You, 'tis not to tell You, and the *World*, what You ought to be, but what You are; Invested with an Authority of infinite Consequence to the Peace, and Happiness of our Church and State, and endued with qualities equal to the execution of it. 'Tis hardly possible for us, who live and act so far beneath You, to conceive, or apprehend the numerous Temptations and

and Difficulties You are sure to meet with in *Your High Stations*; and which indeed require the most *invincible Courage* and *firm Integrity* of Mind. The Frowns, and secret Menaces of Men in Power: The Malice of the Crafty; the Pride, and Insolence of the Haughty; the Factions of the Turbulent; the restless Cries, and Importunities of the Miserable and Afflicted (with many more such things, which we cannot think of) must all be prevented, or sustain'd by you in the steady Prosecution of your Office. When *cunning*, and *ill* Men shall seek to pervert the *Law*, and to *turn aside* the Course of *Judgment*, they receive their Check from You. When a *great*, and *powerful Sinner* shall presume upon Impunity; when an *Honourable Thief*, or a *Right Worshipful Murderer*, shall expect the *Law* should condescend to his *Quality*, and that God, and his *Vice-gerents* must deal with him as a *Gentleman*, 'tis You that set him free from his Mistake, and let him feel by his *present Sentence*, what he must expect hereafter. And all this You are sure to be assaulted with from *without*, besides what You are liable to feel from *within*, from your own *Bowels*, in the severer Part of Justice; from your own *good, tender and merciful Nature*; which may sometimes betray a Man, if he does not take heed, to *wave* his Duty, when no Terrors could affright him, or Violence over-power him to *desert* it. And therefore God Almighty, by an express Precept, thought it necessary to set a Guard upon this weak and softer side of our Temper, to prevent the Evils it might otherwise expose us to, and to cut off all Excuses for Commission of them. *Neither shalt thou countenance a poor* Exod. 23. 3.

SERM. II. *man in his cause*, was the direct Command of that *merciful God*, who 'professes' himself, all along, in his Holy Word, to have *no* more near and tender Respect for any, than for the *poor* and *needy*. But *so very much*, we find, is he concern'd for the right Execution of *Justice* in the World, that no Pretence of Mercy in Men must presume to *triumph over it*: Though his own infinite Mercy does always 'so', (and 'tis well for us that it does 'so,') being founded at once upon infinite Goodness, and conducted by infallible Wisdom, which ours, we are sure, cannot be.

These, *My Lords*, and many more such Objections, incident to the Execution of your Office, render it a Matter of your *Fear*, rather than your *Ambition*: And all the *Honours*, that you receive from it, are too little to compensate the great *Charge*, and *Burden* you sustain under it: *Enough* to make a Man almost *tremble* to think of them; and to *justify* the Counsel of the *wise Man* in the highest *Import*, and to the utmost *Consequence* of it, *Seek not to be*
Ecc. 7. 6. Judge, being not able to take away iniquity, lest at any time thou fear the person of the mighty, and lay a stumbling-block in the way of thy uprightness.

What remains then, as the Conclusion of this *long Discourse*; But that *You*, and we, and all, by a faithful Discharge of our Duty in our several Degrees and Places, endeavour to engage the Protection of Heaven on our Side; and to draw down a Blessing upon our Church and Nation, *if it may be a lengthening of our*
Don. 4. 27. tranquility! To that end, that we be never *courted* from our Duty by any Favours, nor
frighted

frighted by any Terrors, of the World. Let **S E R M. II.**
 us arise therefore, and be of good Courage, at
 such a time as this is more especially, and let ^{2 Sam. 10. 12.}
 us play the men for our people, and for the Cities ^{Esh. 4. 14.}
 of our God. Let us do our own Duty for the
 Defence of our Religion and Country, and
 leave the Success of all to God Almighty: Who
 can tell, but He will yet Bless us, and the Work
 shall yet prosper in our Hands? If we find
 favour in his eyes, He will either prevent our
 Sufferings, or, in his own good Time, remove
 them. And though He should suffer evil Men
 for a while to ride over our heads, and even to ^{Pf. 66. 12.}
 cast us out from God's inheritance: yet, we have ^{2 Sam. 14. 16.}
 found, He can by his Almighty Power bring us
 again, and shew us both it, and his holy habitation.
 But, if He now say thus unto us, I have no de-
 light in you, behold here we are, let him do to us ^{2 Sam. 13.}
 as seemeth good unto him. What can we do, ^{15. 6.}
 but hide our faces in the dust, and confess with
 the deepest Humility, and Dejection of Spirit be-
 fore him; Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just art ^{Pf. 119. 137.}
 thy judgments! 'Tis sure our Sins are great and
 numerous, and have deserv'd it from him: Our
 Profaneness and Hypocrisy, our Non-profici-
 ency under the best Means of Grace, in one
 of the best Churches, and under the purest
 Worship in the World; Our going off from
 our old Principles, and shuffling with our Con-
 sciences; Our trifling with Oaths, and bring-
 ing down the high and holy name of God to our
 own Vanity, to secure our present, little, in-
 considerable Interests; These things may have
 made Him see it Necessary, to let us pass through
 the Furnace of Affliction to refine us from our
 Dross. But let us return, and amend our Ways, ^{If. 48. 10.}
 and

GERM II

BER M H and still hope for Mercy. Or if He has otherwise determined concerning us, and the Hand of Justice must take hold of us, *Yet, O merciful God, chastise us in measure, we beseech thee, correct us with judgment, not in thine anger, lest thou bring us to nothing.* Take the matter into thine own hand; we commit our selves unto thee; for very great are thy mercies; but suffer us not any more to fall into the hands of men.

From whose Designs and Practices against us,
of his infinite Mercies deliver us all, for
Jesus Christ his sake: To whom with thee,
O Father, and the Blessed Spirit, be ascrib'd
all Praise, Honour, Power, Might, Ma-
jesty, and Dominion, now and for evermore.
Amen.

SERM III

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*The Church's Security, from the Providence of
GOD Defending Her, and the Goodness of
Her own Cause and Constitution.*

A
SERMON

Preach'd Before the

MAYOR,

AND

Corporation of OXFORD,

AT

St. Martin's Church, on Monday,

November the Fifth, 1705.

The Third Edition.

ISAIAH LIV. 17.

*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper;
and every tongue that shall rise against
thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn.*

THE Promise here made of a Divine Protection and Security from Evil, is immediately directed to the Church of God, against which, God assures her upon his infallible Word, and upon the Pledge of his infinite and uncontrollable Power, no Designs

signs or Practices of *her* Enemies should ever prevail, how well soever form'd and set together by the Rules of Policy, or the deepest Skill and Artifice of Malice. In all their secret Plots and Contrivances, and in their more Open and Violent Assaults, he tells us, he would be sure to disappoint them by the Might of his *own* Hand: And in their *more* refin'd, but not *less* malicious Methods of Proceeding against *her*, by the way of Cavil and Objection, Dispute and Controversy, *she* *her* *self* should be sufficiently able to Confute and Baffle them, by the Clearness and Evidence of *her* Truth: No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn.

And beyond these two things, if we consider them both together, the mighty Strength of *her* Defence and Preservation from *without*, and the firmness of *her* own Cause and Constitution *within*, there can be nothing else necessary to give us the utmost Satisfaction of *her* Continuance and everlasting Establishment.

To this purpose therefore God is pleas'd, from the 11th Verse of this Chapter, to display the full Force of both these Arguments for the Church's Security, as it relies upon *his* Providence, and *her* own internal Excellency; and to speak so great things of *her*, and in Terms of such high Importance, as imply the most glorious State of Perfection in the Church, that 'tis possible for any Constitution in this World to arrive to. Speaking to the Church, in the 11th and 12th Verses, by the way of Resemblance of *her* to a Building, (a Style
very

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very frequent both in the *Old and New Testa-* **SERM. III.**
ment) he tell *her* thus, *I will lay thy stones*
with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with
Sapphires; And I will make thy windows of
Agates, and thy gates of Carbuncles, and all
thy borders of pleasant stones; that is, he would
spare no Cost or Charge about her, that every
part of her Structure should have in it a due
Proportion of Ornament and Strength, of
Firmness and Beauty together: For this we
know is the peculiar Excellency of those pre-
cious stones, that are here brought in by the
Prophet, as the choice Materials of her Com-
position.

And because they are so, and for that the
Church is here said to be *founded* upon, and
built up with them; hence we are enabled the
better to understand what is here intended by
this *figurative* way of Speaking, *viz. All*
that divine Excellency of Doctrine and Govern-
ment, which are necessary and essential to the
Church of God; upon which it was at first
founded, and by which it must always stand.
Which appears more evident yet from what
follows in the 13th and 14th Verses, where
the *Prophet* comes a little to explain himself;
All thy Children shall be taught of the Lord,
and great shall be the peace of thy children. In
righteousness shalt thou be establish'd.

Thus far then we see the *Prophet* repre-
sents the Church's Security from *her own in-*
ward Strength and Constitution. In the two
next Verses before the Text follows *her* Pro-
tection from *without*, from the Power and Pro-
vidence of God surrounding and guarding *her*
on every side, from the Secret and Open At-
tempts

SER. M. III. tempts of those that hate *her*: Behold, says God in the 15th Verse, *They shall surely gather together, but not by me: whosoever shall gather against thee, shall fall for thy sake*: That is, he would certainly Blast and Defeat the Designs and Intentions of *her* Enemies, how strongly soever combin'd in their *Numbers*, or united in their Counsels against *her*. And for a Conviction to Men, that he was able to do all this, which he had declar'd he would do, *He* appeals, in the 16th Verse, to his absolute and irresistible Power, upon which all Creatures, even the most hurtful of them, Depend, not only for their Being, but their Power of Action: And therefore, to be sure, nothing could ever prevail to do Mischief beyond the Bounds and Limits that were set to it by his *Will*, and his *Permission*. Behold, *I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy*: There is no Artificer of Fraud or Malice, but proceeds upon a borrow'd Strength, and can go no farther than God will let him. The *smith that with the tongs worketh in the coals*, as this Prophet elsewhere expresses it, and *fashioned it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms*, must fail and faint in his Spirits, were it not for that God, from whom he derives the very Strength, which he abuses to the Instruments of Cruelty and Superstition; he depends, both for his Ability, and for his Success in his Work, upon a Power above him. And therefore where God has once made the Promise, the Church may rely upon him with a full Security,

city, that *No weapon that is formed against her shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against her in judgment, she shall condemn.* SERM. III.

Which words, we now see, are a short Inference drawn from the joint Force of both the former Arguments; the watchful Providence of God over his Church, and *her* own sufficient Establishment; for that God is infinitely Powerful and Careful of *her*, therefore *No weapon that is formed against her shall prosper*: and because *she* is Established upon everlasting Grounds of Truth, *she* must prevail against all Expectations of *her* Enemies, and *condemn* and silence *every tongue that shall rise against her in judgment*, to Arraign *her* Truth and Innocence.

In Discourſing upon theſe words, I ſhall, *Fiſt*, Enquire how far the Promise of Protection, made to the Church in *general*, may be apply'd to our own in *particular*, and upon what Grounds we may hope for the Accompliſhment of it to our ſelves.

Secondly, I ſhall endeavour to repreſent our former great Deliverances, by the Providence of God over us; and how fully God has acquitted his Promise to our Church hitherto, in defending us, both from the Deſigns, and againſt the Objections of our Enemies; and this with a more particular Regard to the Occaſion of *this Day*.

Thirdly, I will ſhew how well qualified our Church is at preſent to Answer the Cavils and Reproaches of *her* Enemies againſt *her*, and upon what Conditions;

on

on our part, we may yet hope to be secur'd from their Designs.

I shall *First* enquire, how far the Promise of God's Protection and perpetual Defence to his *Church in general*, may be apply'd to *our own in particular*; and upon what Grounds we may hope, through God's Mercy, for the Accomplishment of it to our selves. And 'tis no more than necessary for me to make a *Distinction* in this case, because there is so great a *Difference* here to be observ'd between a Promise made to the *Catholick* or *Christian Church in general*, and the same when apply'd to any particular Church or Constitution whatsoever; and we can't depend upon the Performance of a Promise, when 'tis referr'd to this, or that, or any one part of the *Christian Church*, with the same Evidence and Certainty of Faith, that we may for God's continual Preservation of the Church it self. For his Engagement to the Church in general was this, that he would build it upon a secure Foundation, and preserve it by his Providence over it, and Presence in it, *to the end of the world; that the gates of hell should never prevail against it*, that is, no destructive Methods of the Enemies of the Christian Religion should ever prevail, to the final and universal Ruine of it; But that he would always keep up the Light of his Truth in the World, and take care, that whatsoever *darkness might cover the earth*, and *gross darkness the people*, yet his Blessed Son should have always a *Lamp* before him in the World; always a Number of Men upon Earth, some where or other, professing

Is. 60. 2.

1 King. 15. 4.

fessing his holy eternal Truth. But then, that this Society of Men owning and professing the Faith of Christ should be always the very same, and confin'd to the same Place and Nation, he has given us no such infallible Security from his Word, that we know of; and we are sure, by the Event, it has been, sometimes otherwise; and God himself has often threaten'd the contrary, and executed it for the Sins of Men; When he has remov'd his *Candlestick* from a Nation, for their Abuse of the Light which he had given them; and translated his *Kingdom* from one People to another, that would *bring forth the fruits of it* in their Lives and Conversations. Where are now the Seven famous Churches of *Asia*, that were once the Glory of the Christian World! Has not God quench'd their Light, and put it out in *Obscurity*? Has he not withdrawn his more especial Presence from them, and given them up to be so far over-run with Ignorance, Barbarism, and Superstition, that there is hardly the Print of true Religion to be found amongst them! And does he not still suffer them to live under the Tyranny and Oppression of their Enemies, that rule over them with a Rod of Iron! So that what we now see and read in the *Prophecy* that went before concerning them, in the *Revelation* of St. John, seems to be only an *historical* Account of the Evils they have suffered.

Rev. 2. 5.

Matth. 21. 43.

Prov. 20. 20.

We see then, that God does not think himself bound by his Faithfulness, or by Vertue of any Promise to the Church in general, to preserve any one particular Church, any longer, than it has those Conditions of Holiness and

SERM. III. Purity in its own Constitution, and in the Members of it, which he expects. He will indeed always have a Church in some place or other of the World, till the End of it: But whether our Church, or our Neighbours shall be that, or any part of it, must depend upon other Considerations yet, of the Nature and Quality of the Church it self, and the Behaviour of those Men that live under it. That there shall be some true Christian Church, as long as the World continues, he has absolutely promis'd, and 'tis but the just Reward of his Son's Sufferings, and *he* may claim it in the Right and Vertue of the Covenant between God and *him*; for he died to that End, that he might purchase *to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works*. And therefore God has engag'd his own Truth to him, for the Certainty of the Event, that he may see *of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied*. But then, we can no otherwise pronounce our own particular Church at any time to be that, which he will always continue to preserve, unless we find, upon a just Enquiry, those Marks of a true Church in it, which we may hope will never fail: So that, in short, you see, the Promise of Protection made to the Catholick Church, as such, is *absolute*, and without reserve, founded only upon the Merits of our Saviour, and with respect to those alone: But the Promise to any particular Constitution is *conditional*, and must depend both upon the Nature of that Constitution, and upon our own Lives too, who are the Members of it.

Tit. 2. 14.

Isaiah 53. 11.

I shall

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I shall therefore now endeavour to shew, that the *Church of England* has those Qualifications or Conditions in it, so far as concerns it self, as, through the Mercy of God, will always engage his Presence in, and Protection over it, if we are not wanting to our selves.

The Two great things, that go to make up the Nature of a Church, are *Doctrine* and *Discipline*; and therefore where these are found the best and purest, that Church in it self is, beyond all question, the most sound and excellent in its Frame and Constitution of any other in the World, and has the surest Title to the Divine Protection upon that account.

Now there is in the *Church of England*, and we may appeal to all the World for it, the greatest Purity of *Doctrine* and Worship possible; an exact Conformity between the Laws and Rules of our Religion, as it is establish'd amongst us, and the Religion of our Saviour, as we find it in the Gospel. The *Articles* of our *Faith* are most of them expressly asserted in very Words in the Writings of the New Testament; and the rest are deduced by plain and evident Consequence from thence: And the *Articles* of our *Church*, as it stands distinguish'd from any other, are, every one of them, laid out and fram'd according to the just proportion of *Faith*, the general Tenour of our Saviour's and his Apostles *Doctrine*. Is there any one thing, in the whole *Scheme* of our Religion, that we enjoin as necessary in its own Nature, which is not clearly so by the Laws of Christianity? Or do we corrupt the Gospel of our Saviour, by *wresting* it to
G 2 any

SERM. III.

any false and violent Sense, either to serve our Interest, or disguise the Faults of our Practice? Do we deal with the Scriptures as the Church of *Rome* does? Do we either *conceal* or *cancel* any part of them, in order to reconcile it to our Vices, that so it may less thwart and oppose any erroneous Opinions or Customs amongst us?

He that shall look into the Rules of Faith and Manners deliver'd by the *Papists*, will find them overcharg'd with such Numbers of *unnecessary*, and therefore *unlawful* Articles; he will find the *Inventions* of Men bound upon the Conscience, under such impudent Pretences of a Divine Authority, when there is not *one word* to be found for them in the Holy Scriptures, but a *great deal* that makes against them; he will find the plainest Rules of Life and Practice, either so expressly deny'd, or clearly disappointed of their just Influence, by the false and impious Interpretations of their *Doctors*, that he must presently conclude the great Folly and Danger of that Religion to the Souls of Men, and that surely *in vain they do worship God, teaching for doctrines such commandments* as they do. They defeat the main Design of the Christian Faith, and render the only means of Grace almost utterly ineffectual, by mixing with it so many of their own Corruptions.

That we have *then* utterly renounc'd the Errors of these Men, and all others, and that we are clearly *gone out* from amongst them, and have reform'd our selves upon the true Model of all Religion, the Word of God himself, *is* and *ought* to be some ground of Comfort

fort to us; and an Encouragement to depend on God for our Defence and Preservation. For being the God of Truth, he will be the great *Patron* and *Protector* of it; and we can't but think him *there* to be more immediately concern'd for its Interest; *where* he finds it in the greatest Purity and Perfection: And therefore we may be sure that, unless the Sins of Men exceed, and provoke his Justice beyond measure, he will never suffer his own Cause to fall under the *Adversary's* Hand, to be either *undermin'd* by the secret Attempts, or to be *over-born* by the violent Assaults of Error and Superstition.

So much then for the *Doctrine* of our Church; and as for our *Discipline*, and the outward Circumstances of our Worship, even there, where 'tis left undetermin'd by the Word of God, and referr'd to the Prudence and Direction of our Church-Governours; yet 'tis all so full of Order and Beauty, so well adjusted to Men's Necessities, so wisely suited to express the inward Frame and Temper of Religion, and to assist and promote a true Devotion in the Hearts of Men; that if we judge not according to our Prejudices, but our *Reason*, we must conclude, that he, that is *the God of Order*, is highly pleas'd with it, and that he will be jealous of its Honour, and will stand up in its Defence himself, as he requires in us a just Zeal and Concern for its Support. For as there is nothing which the Providence of God is more concern'd for in the World, than the Practice of Religion, so there can be no Frame and outward way of Worship more agreeable to his Will than that,

SERM. III. which best serves the End and Interests of Religion. And therefore those Ceremonies, and that Worship, are certainly the best and purest, which tend to give us the most worthy Opinions of God; to create the most serious Awe and Reverence in the Hearts of Men towards him; and to teach Men how to express their inward Respect and Veneration, by a suitable Demeanour in his Presence.

I hope there is no need for me in this place, nor can I be expected, to go through the several Instances of Religion and Worship, in order to convince you both of the *internal* and *outward* Excellency of it. Those, that constantly attend the House of God, are better acquainted with the *Beauty of Holiness*, than that they should stand in need, upon every Occasion, to have it prov'd to them by long Arguments, which they can't deny. 'Twere easy otherwise to run through all the Doctrines of our Church, and shew the Agreeableness of every one of them to the holy Scriptures; and then to take each part of our Discipline asunder, and to prove its Conformity to the Word of God, or to the Practice of the purest and most primitive Ages of the Church, before ever *Papery* was heard of in the World; when Religion was at the highest pitch of Perfection, both in the Hearts of its Professors, and the Circumstances of its Worship. But these things 'tis sufficient for me to assert *now*, and not to prove; my Design being only to shew into what comfortable Consequences this one Truth of the Purity and Excellency of our Church might be improv'd; and what Strength of Argument might be drawn from
thence

thence to conclude God's more especial Providence and watchful Concern for the Preservation of a Church, which has so much of Perfection in the Frame and Constitution of it.

If we observe the method of the Prophet's Reasoning in the Verses before my Text, we find he infers the Promise and Title it has to God Almighty's Protection and Defence, as a just Consequence from those admirable Advantages of Truth and Beauty laid in the Foundation and Structure of it. *I will make thy windows of Agates, and thy gates of Carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones: and all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children:* And from hence it follows, *No weapon that is form'd against thee shall prosper.* When the Church was arriv'd to that Perfection and Glory, which God himself design'd for it, and in which himself delighted, there should then be a *Defence upon all this glory*; and he would spread out the Arms of his Protection over it, as being a Charge more worthy of his more immediate Concern and Tuition.

Isaiah 4. 5.

We find in the Holy Scriptures, with what Reluctance God himself is represented to proceed, when the Sins of Men oblige him to desert, and extirpate a Church which himself had founded, more particularly in the 5th Chapter of *Isaiah*, where he is brought in under Expressions of the greatest Tenderness and Passion, expostulating with the Jews, why they would force him by their Disobedience to *pluck up and root out his own vineyard*, when he design'd the greatest Care and Kindness over it, and had taken all the Me-

SERM. III.

thods possible for its Preservation and Continuance. But they had disappointed all by their Sins, and therefore he was now constrain'd, even contrary to his own Inclinations, to desert them, to break down the hedge of their Defence, and to leave them open to the Rapine and Violence of their Enemies. *And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard, I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up: and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be troden down. And tho' we have now no new Prophecies deliver'd us, every day, concerning the methods of his dealing with the Church on Earth; yet being himself always the same, we may be sure he observes still the same measures of Wisdom and Justice in his Dispensations towards it. And since we plainly find the Purity and greater Perfection of the Church's Constitution, in old times, to be a greater Argument for his Preservation and Deliverance of her, we must conclude the same now, with respect to any Christian Church at present, where the Purity of Religion shall prevail. The same tender Care for the Salvation of Men's Souls will incline and oblige the Father of Mercies to continue them in the Possession of the best Religion upon Earth, our own, till there is no Hopes left that Men will be the better for it, and till they render themselves utterly unworthy of the Blessings*

things they enjoy : And when they are *once* come to *such* an height of Iniquity as *this*, it then becomes Mercy in God to withdraw the means of Grace from them ; since, upon their want of Improvement under so excellent a Religion, it must only turn to their greater *Condemnation*.

I have now endeavour'd to shew you, how far we may depend upon the *general* Promise of Protection made to the *Church*, as it respects our selves in *particular* ; and by what measures we may judge of God's more especial Regard to, and Care over, any Constitution ; namely, as 'tis the best and purest in it self, and produces answerable Fruits in the Lives and Practice of Men.

I shall now go on, *Secondly*, to represent our *former* great Deliverances by the Providence of God over us ; and how fully God has acquitted his Promise *hitherto*, by defending us both from the Designs, and against the malicious Objections, of our *old Enemies of the Church of Rome* ; and *that* with a more *particular* regard to the Occasion of *this Day*.

'Tis well known, amongst those that have heard, or understand any thing of the History of our *Reformation*, what violent measures, and sly artifices of *Devilish Policy* were made use of, in those first and *perilous times*, either to keep us *always* in our Errors, or to bring us back *again* to them, by a Set of Men of the *loosest* Principles, and blackest Malice ; who regard Religion it self no further than as the Pretence of it will serve to gratify their own wicked Designs, and keep up the Pomp and Grandeur of their *Apostate Church*. For *Papery* is a Religion, if it deserves that Name, that

SER. M. that strikes at the very Root of Christianity, and wounds it in the most *tender* and *vital* parts; bringing down the high and heavenly Doctrines of our *Blessed Saviour*, to serve a mere worldly *carnal* Interest, and to keep up an unjust Usurpation upon the Estates, Liberties, and Consciences of Men: A *Religion* whose *Godliness* is only *Gain*, whose Doctrines are *Sensual* and *Devilish*, whose *Devotion* is *Superstition*, and whose *Discipline* is *Tyranny*: Which endures no Restraints of Conscience, when they stand in Competition with present Interest and Power: Which indulges Men in a Life of Looseness and Sensuality, changing or reversing all the Sanctions of the Gospel; and evacuating the utmost Force of them, by accepting, instead of constant Holiness of Life, an easy Penance; and for the eternal Punishments of another World, denounc'd upon every soul of man that does evil, proposing only a slight Censure, or a Sum of Money.

And 'twas with these Men's Principles and Practices our Church has been *now* conflicting almost Two Hundred Years. And their Malice against us has been always heighten'd and enrag'd, by the greater Opposition there was still between them and us in Matters of Religion.

And as they never wanted Principles, so neither did they frequently Opportunities to our Ruine, had not the Hand of God himself interpos'd for our Security. When our Church at the Beginning of the Reformation was yet tender, and but a very *little Flock*, it was Forc'd however to grapple with a long-settl'd Usurpations of Prejudice, and against all the Dif.

Disadvantages of an Enemy, arm'd with Terror, and fir'd with Revenge. How many Designs were still in hand, either by Fraud or Violence, to have overturn'd the Church of England, and to have stifled it in its very Infancy! 'Twas compass'd in by Enemies on every side: *without were fightings, and within were fears*: Fears even from those who pretended to be her Friends, and yet were ready, upon any favourable Occasion, to have let in the Enemy upon her with all his Violence. And yet we see the invincible Strength and Firmness of Truth, however naked and unarm'd with temporal Advantages, when supported and sustain'd by the secret Aid and Influence of Heaven. How did our Church, in those days, stand firm in the midst of all the Floods of her Persecutors, pass safe through all their Attempts, and at the same time Triumph over all their Objections.

For neither did they fail in any supply of Wit or Artifice of Learning, if any had been sufficient, to oppose the Truth, and to have supported Error. Almost all the Means and Opportunities of Learning were, at that time, in their Hands; and by a long Use and Preparation, they had Arguments ready upon every turn; and Industry enough to apply them with all Advantage. And yet even then, by the good Providence of God, there were found Men amongst us able to stand up in our Defence; to encounter our sharpest Enemies at their own Weapons; and to bear them down, by the Force of Truth, to their Confusion.

Such as this was the perpetual Contest for many Years; and notwithstanding our Adversaries

SERM. III. *aries* were still the more whetted by constant Opposition, and had gone as far in the Researches of Learning, as 'twas possible for Men of the best Abilities, and greatest Application, of that time; yet God Almighty never left his Church without able Pillars to sustain *her*; and added more Strength, where the Weight was heavier, and the Exigence and Necessity of times requir'd it. So that even the *Jesuits* themselves, those refin'd Disputants, so well vers'd in all the *Shifts* and *Quirks* of Reasoning, have been forc'd to give out in their way at *last*; and silently to own the Burden too great for them, and their Cause too bad to be defended by such Methods. So far has the Promise of God, in the *Text*, been verified to our Church already; in that *She* surmounted all the Objections of *her* worst and most ingenious Adversaries, and condemn'd to Silence *every tongue that rose in judgment to oppose her*.

But when these Measures were entirely disappointed, there were other still succeeding, to undermine our Church, by the more subtle Arts of Policy, and deep Contrivances of *dark* and *hidden Designs*. And 'tis to these our *sure* and *fast* Friends the *Jesuits* have chiefly had Recourse of late, being less concern'd *now* for that mighty Reputation of Learning, *once* in their Order, if they can serve their own Cause, and confound their Enemies, by Arguments found much more effectual than Disputing; I mean, those very powerful Ones of *Fire* and *Fagot*; of *Cruel Massacres*; of *Plots* and *Conspiracies* against the Lives of Kings and their People: *one* of which

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which well urg'd, and set home, has very often done them more Service in a Nation, than *fourty* Arguments from Reason. SERM. III.

And amongst the rest of these, the *Conspiracy* of this Day claims the Precedence of hellish Policy; and represents all their Skill in Ruine, and refin'd Arts in Blood and Murder, at one View. A Design hatch'd with so much Malice, so deeply laid, and so secretly carried on; so nearly effected, and of so wide and destructive an Influence if it had succeeded, that we may defy the Records of former Times to *shew* an Instance like it, or the utmost Villany of the present and future Ages to *contrive* one. A Design, that must have overturn'd our Constitution at one blow; laid all the Honour of our Nation in the Dust, at once; and have for ever prevented the means of our Recovery.

If we judge then of the Greatness of a Deliverance by the Greatness of the Danger we escape; it becomes us often in our private Thoughts, upon every Occasion, however always upon the grateful Return of this Solemnity, to render our highest Tribute of Praise and Thanks to the God of Heaven, for this so great a Blessing, that so very nearly concerns us *still*; the Influence of which we feel all of us at this very Day; since without it we should either, most of us, not have been at all, or have been always miserable. And now we are all well and happy this Day, and rejoicing under the Protection, and in the Sense and Influence of God's Mercy; *For which thy name, O God, be prais'd from generation to generation. The fathers shall tell the children and declare*

declare thy truth. For is there a nation under heaven, that has God so near to them for their defence and safety, as this great and happy people; Happy if they know their own Happiness, and have the Hearts to give God the Praise and Glory for it! He is the rock of our defence, and the God of our salvation; Therefore will we not fear though the earth be moved; and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof rage and swell; and though the mountains shake at the tempest of the same.

And so I come to the *Third* and *Last* part of my Discourse, to shew how well qualify'd our Church is at present to answer the Cavils and Reproaches of *her* Enemies, and how we may *still* hope to be secur'd from their Designs.

And this I take to be very pertinent to the Aim and Intendment of my Text, which is not levell'd at the Church's Enemies of any one *particular* Strain or Denomination: but reaches out a Promise of Protection and Security from their Attempts and Objections against *her* in all Ages. I shall mention those however, that have the nearest Relation to this present Time of our *Solemnity*; and which, though we have answer'd them never so often before, by Arguments drawn both from our Principles and Practice, are yet *still* produc'd and urg'd against us, by some Men, in order to their own Designs; when, at the same time, they themselves are, or ought to have been, entirely convinc'd, both of the utter Vanity and Slander of them: And they are these that follow;

That our Church is *Popish* in its Ceremonies;
and

and Discipline; and that those Men, who stand up with the greatest Zeal in her Defence and Vindication, are *Popishly* inclin'd, and affected to a *Popish* Interest.

As to the *Former* of these, one would have expected, after so many laborious *Treatises*, written on purpose to vindicate our Church in this Point by Men, who many of them themselves suffer'd in their dearest Interests, and some of them in their very Lives, for their Opposition to *Papery*, that surely this Objection should have been now quite out of Doors; and that, though Men might have retain'd the same ancient *Malice* still against our Church as ever, yet they might, in *Prudence*, have spar'd themselves the *idle pains* of attacking it by a Weapon, that had lost all its Edge and Force against us so long ago. 'Tis not possible for me, in a Discourse of this short Compass, to pass through the long Stages of this Controversy in all its parts; it may be sufficient only to referr Men to some of these substantial *Treatises* written in our Defence upon this Subject, with so much Clearness, and Strength, and Force of Argument, that we have never known them yet answer'd to any purpose; and we are sure they never can be. Those that I shall mention are, Bp. *Jewel's Apology for the Church of England*, and Mr. *Hooker*, and Mr. *Chillingworth's* Books; the last of whom was treated with all the Rudeness and Insolence by the *Faction*, both in his * Person and † Memory, for no other

* See *Ld. Clarendon, Book VIII. p. 365, 6.* † By Cheynell at his Burial, See Cheynell's *Account of Mr. Chillingworth's Sickness, Death, and Burial, especially his Speech at his Funeral.*

SERM. III. Reason so much, that we can think of, unless 'twas, because he had so effectually prevented and weaken'd their old Charge of *Popery* against the *Church of England*, by vindicating her so very clearly and powerfully from any Imputation of that Nature. And to those Men, who, after all the Pains and Travel of these great Men I have here nam'd and others, the most learned in the World, will have the Courage, or the Impudence, still to be suggesting this old thred-bare Cavil against us, I think it necessary at present to make no other Reply than this general one; That almost every Usage of any Consequence, enjoyn'd at present by the *Church of England* in her Service, is to be found in the ancient *Liturgies* and *Histories* of the *Primitive Church*; long before ever *Popery* came to prevail in the World, or the *Church of Rome* was known for its Corruption*.

But then, as for the other Objection against us, That Church-men, in the Zeal they shew for the Church, have ill Designs, and are affected to a *Popish* Interest; this is a Cavil indeed of a more modern Date, and fresher Stamp, and fit to spring up in an Age so very corrupt as this, and so utterly lost to the true Spirit and Temper of Religion. We may remember however, how much Service this Cry of *Popery*, against the true Defenders of the Church, did those ill Men, whose Design was nothing less than to overturn it in the Beginnings of the last great *Rebellion*: And, when they urge it against us now, upon no

* And for any Man's more thorough Satisfaction in this point, let him consult L'Estrange's Alliance of Divine Offices...

more Reason, and with the same or greater **SERM. III.** Violence, than they did even *then*, in those worst of Days; when all Men saw, by the sad Consequences, *what* they had been all along driving at; I would only ask, whether it may not give us some Suspicion, that there is a Race of Men in the World taking their Aims, by the same means, at the same *Blessed Ends*, their Forefathers once accomplish'd; to the utter Subversion of our Constitution, both in Church and State.

But how *unreasonable* are Men in these malicious Suggestions against us, *for ever*! What greater Evidence could possibly have been given at any time, that the Members of the *Church of England* are at the greatest Distance from any *Popish* Inclinations, than what we have already given them? Have we not taken all the Oaths to the *Queen's Majesty*, and the present Settlement, that were requir'd of us? And I am sure, they are bound in Charity, and by the Laws of Christianity, to think we have done it with a good Conscience, and thorow Satisfaction to our Selves, till they can prove we have not; which we hope they never will be able. And yet after all, *still* we must be *Popishly* affected!

If Arguments from Reason and Charity will not satisfy them, let us come now to *History*, and the Experience of *former Times*. Who, but the *Church of England*, and her best and most zealous Members, in a late unhappy Reign, when *Popery* was just rolling in upon us like a mighty Deluge, stood up with that Strength and Bravery to oppose its Progress, and were the great *Banks* and *Shores* to

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break

SERMON III. break the Violence and Fury of it? When the Dissenters, (to their eternal Shame and Conviction be it spoken) paid all their Addresses and Complements to the *Government*, and its Proceedings; and accepted many insinuating Favours from it, which the *Church of England-men* refused, upon Principles of Conscience. But these Good-men! (notwithstanding their seeming Stiffness against *Popery* at other times) could then comply to any thing, if they could but lessen the Church's Esteem and Authority by it; and come *Popery*, or whatever else, were very easy and well pleas'd, and caress'd themselves in their own Priviledges, only to see us, of the *Church of England*, beneath themselves.

I shall not here insist, that almost all those noble Defences, that were written against *Popery* in those times, were done by the Hands of Church-men; all besides Three cold Pamphlets, that stole out as it were in *Moon-light*, as if their Authors had been ashamed of them, and perhaps they had some reason. But I will not urge this any longer as an Objection against these Men, that they wrote no more against *Popery* in those Days, for it may be they were not able; I am sure 'tis an Argument of our Charity for them, if we think so.

But then besides, Did not many of us actually suffer in our Resistance of *Popery* at that Time? In this great and learned Body of our own *University*, was there not one whole Society turn'd out of all their Interests, for their brave Defence of their Religion, and a good Conscience? And all the rest were prepar'd in Mind and Will to undergo the same,
little

little less than *fiery Trial*, upon the same Reason. At *that* Time, Men that had no great Kindness for us before, even our worst Enemies, were *abam'd*, and *convinc'd* that we had no mixture of *Papery* in our *Principles*, when they saw our *Practice* so clearly prove it beyond all Question. And *why* is this Argument in our Behalf, so soon forgotten in these Days? And *why* must Church-men still be arraign'd as *Papists*? when the *Papists* themselves will own, they met with no severer Checks and Opposition to their Proceedings, than from the best Members of the *Church of England*.

Will nothing satisfy the endless Jealousies and Suspicions of Men? Will they never believe us that we are no Friends to *Papery*, that we are at the greatest Abhorrence to, and Distance from it, and are ready to undergo any thing rather than comply with it? Will Men never be perswaded that we are willing to suffer *again*, unless they see us do so? And to see *this* indeed might perhaps serve to gratify their *Malice* against us; but, I am sure, there is nothing wanting, without it, to satisfy their Reason.

I could say a great deal more on this point, but I must hasten to a Conclusion: And if what has been already said, be not sufficient to put them, in some measure, out of Countenance with this Objection of *Papery* against us, 'tis to be fear'd that nothing will: And therefore 'tis to no purpose indeed to dwell any longer upon this Argument.

And since there is so much Reason on our side, against the Objections of our Enemies,

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we may still hope to be secur'd from the *Designs* and *Practices* of evil Men against our holy Religion, if we are not wanting to our selves; if we don't desert and leave our excellent Church in these evil Days, nor suffer our *Love* towards it to wax cold, by reason of that great *Iniquity*, with which these Times abound; if we continue to possess our Minds with a just Value and Esteem for our holy Faith; if we maintain a firm and unshaken Zeal for it in our Hearts, and be ready to express it, upon all Occasions, in our Words and Actions, by a just and vigorous Defence of our Religion. Otherwise, the Goodness of God will never think it self concern'd to secure us in the Continuance of a Church amongst us, though never so good a one, if we our selves despise it, and judge our selves unworthy of the great Advantages we enjoy: For he has no Delight in slothful Men, but will suffer those Evils to overtake them, which they fear; and from which, tho' their very Hearts tremble at the Apprehension of them, yet they will not so much as reach out their Hands for their own Security.

Above all, let us be sure to add to our Zeal for our Religion, the Virtues and Graces of a pure and holy Life; for these will be our best Security from Evil, and will fight for us more than an armed Man. They will most effectually silence the Calumnies and Ignorance of our Enemies, and engage the firmest Protection of Heaven on our side. Let us be careful therefore to *Add to our faith* and Zeal, *2 Pet. 1. 5, 6.* *vertue; and to vertue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and*

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and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity; for if these things be in us and abound, they will make us that we shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the best Means of Grace, and the purest Religion in the World.

And may God Almighty give us all Grace, at least in this our day, to know the things that belong to our Peace, before they are for ever hid from our Eyes, for Jesus Christ his Sake: To whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be given all Praise, Honour and Glory, throughout all the Churches of the Saints, now and for evermore. Amen.

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The

*The sins and vices of men's lives, the chief
cause of their Ignorance, and Corrupt
Opinions in Religion.*

SERMON

*Preach'd before the
University of Oxford.*

December 11th 1709.

The Second Edition.

JOHN III. 19.

*—Men lov'd darkness rather than light,
because their deeds were evil.*

IN the former parts of this Chapter our Blessed Saviour had been discoursing with *Nicodemus* upon some of the most fundamental points and articles of our Religion, of the nature, design and advantages of the Gospel he came to publish to the World, and of the means of mens admission into it. And how *Nicodemus* receiv'd and entertain'd doctrines of this sublime and heavenly nature, we are inform'd in part, and may guess at the rest, by the exception he took, and the objection he made to our Saviour's argument at his very first entrance on it: *How can a man be born again*, says *Joh. 3. 4 9.* he, *and how can these things be?* Our Saviour however goes on with his discourse to him on these Subjects, and about the conclusion of it, comes and

and assigns a reason, not only why this *ruler of Jews* found it so hard to submit his Faith to embrace the Gospel, but why really it should ever make so little progress, and meet with such constant opposition from the World; and that was indeed, because of the lusts and sinful inclinations of men, which would be sure to stand up and make head against it as an *enemy* that came to give them causes of disquiet; though 'tis certain 'twas design'd by the mercy of God, as the sovereign and utmost remedy for the corruptions of mens *nature* and the *miseries* of their condition. But whatever the Gospel might be in it self, or whatever design it came about, yet as long as men were under this fatal *slumber* from their sins, they would not care to be *awaken'd* out of it, and would either turn away their heads, or endeavour to remove at a distance from them, any *light of truth*, that should come to break in upon, and molest them under the present *easy*, though *evil* posture of their souls. *Men lov'd darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil.*

By *darkness* in these words we are not to understand mere *ignorance*, but *error* likewise, not only a bare *privation* or *absence* of *truth* and *knowledge*, but the *presence* of it's contrary *falsehood*, indeed any thing that stands in opposition to *light*, that *wholsome Metaphor* under which the doctrine of our B. Saviour and his Gospel are here represented.

The design and sense of these words of my text may be very well drawn into, and compris'd under this one easy proposition, which shall therefore be the Subject of my following discourse, namely, That the reason of that re-

SERM. IV.

luciance men have, and that resistance they make against the *laws and doctrines of Christianity*, is from their own vicious *lusts and inclinations*, which would either keep them in utter ignorance of their faith and duty, or dispose them, if that might not be done, to corrupt and pervert the doctrines of the Gospel, in order to render them more compliant and less offensive to their loose and sinful practices.

In the pursuit of this doctrine I shall in the *first* place endeavour to lay before you the reasons whence it comes to pass that men are thus in love with *darkness*, that they will either not see the rule of their duty, or will endeavour to pervert the right sense of it, to *bend* it to a more easy *compliance* with their lusts; and thus our *Saviour* informs us, *men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.*

Secondly I will consider how many ways men thus express this their love to darkness, and by what methods they proceed thus to deceive and mislead themselves in the great concerns of Religion.

And *First*, my design is to *represent* the reasons, whence it comes to pass, that mens sins, their lusts and vicious habits are apt so far to darken and abuse their minds, that they either chuse not to see their duty, or apply themselves to confound and corrupt the truth, in order to make it more easily comport with their evil inclinations. To which one productive principle, I may be bold to say, almost all the poisonous opinions and heresies, that either in the former ages of the Church, or in these later days have struck at the foundation and purity of the Christian faith, do owe their rise and original.

original. 'Tis from the lives and practice of men that generally those *filthy steams* arise, which thus *cloud* and *overcast* their understandings, and give so strange a *turn* and *determination* to their very *thoughts*; so far, that if we observe what course and train of actions a man has for some competent time pursued, we may give more than a guess to what opinions he leans, and how he stands affected as to the notions of his duty. The first acts indeed and beginning of any habit take their rise and model from the thoughts, but when the course of action once comes to be fix'd, and attended with delight and pleasure, then it begins to act by a *backward influence* upon the thoughts themselves, and to fix or change them according to the present *stream* of *habitual inclination*: Men come to *think* in time as they *wish*, they wish according to their *inclinations*, they derive their *inclinations* from *moral habits*, and these are produced by *frequency* of *acting* any way, whether good or evil. But I shall now set my self more immediately to shew what *influence* and *tendency* a *corrupt* and *vicious practice* has to incline men either to *reject* or *oppose* the true Religion, and for what reasons.

First, because the *light of truth* would discover to an ill man the baseness and deformity of sin and vice, and make him a *terror* to himself, by representing him in his own true colours, under all the corruptions and filthiness of his present state; *and this he desires not to see*.

Secondly, 'twould convince him of the great danger of his present course, and by consequence of the necessity of reforming it, which cannot be done, he imagines, without great trouble,

SERMON IV. trouble, and therefore desires not to think of it.

Thirdly, it would take off the edge of his relish, and abate the eagerness of his inclination to his present unlawful interests and pleasures, and *these he cannot endure to part with.*

And *First* the *light of truth* would represent him truly to himself, which would be a terrible sight indeed, and therefore all possible care must be taken that so troublesome a guest be not admitted. *Therefore 'tis*, our Saviour tells us in the words immediately after my Text, *that he hates the light, neither comes to the light*, he dares not approach it, *lest his deeds should be reprov'd*, and made appear to be really what they are. For there is indeed so much *modesty* still left even in the most corrupt and deprav'd natures, from a secret principle of shame that God has *bid* within the consciences of men, that let a man be at never so much *pains* with himself, he can never thoroughly reconcile sin and vice to his own reason and private approbation. 'Tis true he may by a *clamorous* and *tumultuous* way of life, and by the advantage of his outward state and fortune make a shift to get above the opinions of other men, and perhaps *boast* and vaunt himself openly that he can *do mischief*, and so for a while drown and silence the reflections of his own mind, in the height and hurry of his passion. But upon the first occasion, in the *calm* and *cool* of the day, his thoughts of his own evil doings then return upon him with a redoubled force, fill him with a silent *confusion*, and smite him with a secret sting which he cannot bear. And after he has been a long time *labouring* with his *sin*, and at last brought forth his *iniquity*, after all his

his pains and *unwavel* in evil, he presently turns and starts at his own *production*, and would willingly disown it, and fly from it, and even from himself, from the rebukes and censures of his own mind. And therefore when the convictions of religion and conscience come thus to press him hard, he *abuses* by all means to *strangle* his reason and thought, and to *overwhelm* all sober *Reflections* that meet him, in any foolish or absurd Diversion how bad soever, that will any way promise to sooth his Pain, or stupify his present Sense of it. Which is a very strong and convincing Argument, by the way, that the distinction of Vice and Vertue are laid a great deal deeper than in the mere Opinions of Men; and that they do not, according to a late sort of *wild Philosophy*, depend upon the *arbitrary Customs and Constitutions of Mankind*, but that the ground of our Perception of the vast Difference between them, is *interwoven* in our Nature, and wrought into the Frame and Constitution of our Being. This seems to appear if from no other Argument, yet sufficiently from hence, from that wonderful *agreeableness* that Actions of Piety and Vertue have to the best Sense and Relish of Men's Minds, and the *disagreeableness* of the contrary, and the utter *abhorrence* that our Nature carries in it to Sin and Vice: So far, that a Man cannot, by all his Artifices, upon cool Thoughts, *avoid* or *overcome* the shame and upbraidings of his own Reason, that attend a loose and wicked Course of Life. Upon this account therefore a state of Sin must ever be an irreconcilable Enemy to the knowledge of God's Will and Law, in as much as this would
bring

Hobbes.

SERM. IV. bring out the Sinner to his shame, into clear and open Light, and leave him Defil'd and Loathsome in his own Eyes. And therefore he thus endeavours to shut them as fast as he can, and is willingly Ignorant of the Rule of his Duty, which he has so often and so heinously broken. For though he may have learnt by the *deceitfulness of Sin*, to pass a Cheat upon the World about him, who cannot see his Thoughts, nor look into the *rottenness* of his Heart, yet when the *Scourge of God's Law* sounds in his Ears, and the *Book of Life* lies open to the view of his Mind, he *trembles in secret*, and durst not behold, and therefore seeks to draw a veil of Ignorance or Error before his Eyes, that he may not be forc'd to condemn himself to his own Confusion. And by this means, tho' against his Will, he gives the strongest Evidence and Testimony to the *Word of God*, that can be, which yet he refuses to acknowledge: By his own behaviour he proves it to be *quick and powerful, and*

Heb. 4. 12. *sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow, and that 'tis a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* And if he would but look sufficiently into it, he is too sensible it would present him with a sight too Terrible for him to behold, of all his base and treacherous Dealings with the great God and Author of his Being, and best Benefactor of his Life; 'twould bring to his Remembrance from what he is fallen, that he has stain'd and polluted the Dignity of his Nature, and sunk himself into a Condition worse than that of a Beast, and force him to lament and bewail him-

himself in the *Dust*. 'Twould search and try his heart to the bottom, and leave no corner of Corruption in it undiscried. It would rip up all his Base Designs, and unmask his Hypocritical Pretences, and make the thick scales of spiritual blindness drop from off his Eyes, that he might see his own Vileness and Misery, with a clear and uninterrupted view. And such Thoughts, and such a View as this, he cannot bear, because 'twould sink his Courage to the Ground, and put him to utter Disgrace with, and in Detestation of himself for ever. This, this would be the case of every grievous Sinner, could he come to a right sense of his Condition. And because it would be so, and he suspects it would, on that account he so carefully avoids the *light*, or, which comes to the same, endeavours to *quench* and *stifle* it. 'Tis for this Reason that the Apostle brands the Sinful Actions of Men under the *dismal* Title of *works of darkness*, not only because *darkness*, is most properly the Principle from whence they flow, inasmuch as all Sin whatsoever proceeds from a *present* blindness and inadvertency of Mind, but upon this account more especially, because *Darkness* is the proper *Region* and *Covering* under which such Works would, if 'twere possible, lie conceal'd for ever; and even escape the Eyes and Thoughts of those that do them. So far then is a sinful Life a Friend to *darkness*, in that *light* is the greatest Enemy it can have, making all its *Spots* of *Pollution* appear, and reflecting the greatest Dishonour and Reproach upon it.

Afr. 9. 18.

Ephes. 5. 11.

But then *Secondly*, the *Light* of *Divine Truth*, the Principles of *Religion* and *Conscience*, would

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SERM. IV. convince a Wicked Man likewise of the infinite Danger of his present Course, and by consequence of the Necessity of Reforming it; and this cannot be done, he thinks, without great trouble, and therefore desires not to be disturb'd about it. Which, one would think, should be a strong and powerful Argument on the contrary, that because he *at least* suspects himself in so much Danger, he should therefore be the more concern'd before it is too late, to look out for the means of its prevention. But we are not to expect that a Man enslav'd under the Power and Dominion of Sin, should act reasonably in any matters, that relate to his Spiritual Condition. Habits of Sin and Vice do, both by a natural and judicial Consequence, so Blind and Infatuate the Minds of Men, that they go perfectly the Reverse to the Principles of Reason and Nature, and take the nearest Method to their *Ruin*, while they think they are providing most for their own *Security*. 'Tis impossible otherwise, that a Man of common Understanding, and in whom the Principle of *Self-preservation* is not quite Extinct, should chuse, only for his *present Ease*, not to apprehend a Danger, which, unless he does, is a little after Irrecoverable; the sad Consequence of which, he must *Feel and Rue for ever*. But when we go on to consider the Matter a little more nearly, we shall find wherein 'tis this strange power of Sin, to deceive Men in a Matter of such infinite Consequence, lies; and what 'tis that thus Betrays them to their Ruin.

This is the Fatal *Snare* of Sinners, the *Se-*
Job 18. 9. cret Gin that takes them by the Heel, and re-
 tains

tains them in *darkness*, the strong Suspicion that lies at the bottom of their Hearts, that if they once come to look throughly into the Business of Religion, into the Punishments and Terrours it *denounces* to Disobedience, they shall *then* be no longer able to hold up their Faces, or justify their Practices with any Courage; or with any appearance of Reason, be able to Account to themselves for their own *Proceedings*. And that every *Sin* they commit, after a thorough Conviction of their Danger, will be an Eternal Blot upon the *Reputation* of their *Wisdom*, and be constantly checking and upbraiding them with their own desperate Madneſs and Folly. And this obliges the Sinner, in purſuance of his *ſecret* and *ſtedfaſt* *Resolution*, not to change the Courſe of his Life; to look as little into the Rules and Doctrines of Religion, and to be as little acquainted with the *Arguments* and *Representations* of another World, as may be. For, under the *force* and *power* of ſuch Convictions, there is no way left to eſcape the ſevere *Laſhes* of his own Thoughts, the conſtant and *cutting* *Reproaches* of his Reason, but by entering upon new *Resolutions*, and *taking up at once*, and changing the whole Courſe and Tenour of his Practice. But this, he concludes, is attended with ſo much difficulty, there are ſo many *Lions* of maſterly Luſts and beaſtly Inclinations to be encounter'd with *in the way* of his Duty, that he can never expect to be a *match* for, or hope to overcome them; and therefore chuſes to lie down *ſluggiſhly* in his preſent Pollutions, and that he may do ſo *quietly*, turns his face to the wall, from ſeeing the heavy Judgment that

PROV. 26. 13.

SERM. IV. that awaits him, and which he is *infinitely* *jealous* will shortly take hold of him in another World. This is the fatal influence of Sin, that it robs a Man, first of his Virtue and Innocence, and then enfeebles all the powers of his Soul, and quite *dashes* all Resolutions of Recovery. But remember and *shew your selves men*, bring *Isaiah 46. 8.* it again to mind O ye transgressors! Where is that vigorous manly principle of Spirit and Resolution which God has put within your Breasts? Awake from this deadly slumber, *arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light.* Eph. 5. 15. A beam of that light from heaven struck upon the Soul, will pierce it through; will rouse and quicken a Man, even under this senseless benumn'd Condition of his Spiritual Estate.

Another great hindrance of Men's enquiries into the matters of Religion is, *Thirdly*, this, that a quick and lively Sense of these things, of the Powers and Arguments of *another World*, would take off the Edge of their Relish, and abate the Vigour of their Inclination to what they only value, the present unlawful Pleasures and Interests of this Life; and *these* they cannot *endure to think of parting with.* And so far these Men are certainly in the right, that a due Knowledge of, and a thorow Acquaintance with their Duty, would effectually cool and allay that distemper'd Heat of their Desires, with which they pursue the sinful Enjoyments and Pleasures of this World; for this is indeed their Disease, and Religion is design'd on purpose to remove it. But then this surely ought to be no Objection against Religion, but against themselves; For why
are

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are they not better inform'd, as they might be, **SERM IV.** with a little care, of the Pleasures that are to be had in exchange, in the way of their Duty, of an infinitely more refin'd and excellent Nature than those of Sense. And therefore to *stick* and *cleave* so eagerly to these, to the prejudice, or forfeiture of those that are so far more desirable, is the greatest instance of Weakness, and making a *foolish Bargain*, that can be, which yet these Men are so much afraid of being censur'd for.

'Tis as if a Man should be fond of a *Feaver*, and not care to part with it, because it gives a *sharp* and *quick Relish* to his present *Draught*. When those that stand by, and know the Pleasures of Health, would only take such a Man to be so much farther gone in his Phrensy, and therefore conclude, that he stood in need of a more immediate Care, and present Remedy.

But whatever *Religious Men* may *think*, or *Wise Men* may *argue* of the Pleasures of another World, yet when the *gust* and *relish* of Mens Minds comes once to be deeply deprav'd, by a long Train and Course of sinful Enjoyments, nothing that can be said will ever come near, or touch the Heart of such a *Sensualist*; all the Inclinations of his Soul draw one way, and nothing shall find admittance to his Thoughts, but what comes to gratify him in his own *Sense*, and brings him Advice how to satisfy his present worldly Lusts and Interests. His Desires *run* all *gross* and *dreggy*, and he has no more Apprehension of, or Affection for any other Goods, but those that lie before his Senses, than a *Blind Man* has of *Colours*, or
I any

SERMON IV. any other sense of an Object that is *unproportion'd* to it by Nature.

Now *allowing this Man's Principles*, that there is nothing *better for a Man* indeed, than Eccles. 8. 15. *to eat and drink and to make his soul enjoy sensual Pleasure*, he is certainly much in the right in his *Conclusion*, that the restraints of Religion would only breed Disturbance to him, and therefore are not to be allow'd Access, because they would pretend to confine and cramp the Man in the pursuit of what he thinks his supreme Good and only Happiness; but therein lies his desperate and irrecoverable Mistake.

Religion commands a Man, in prospect of a Bliss, at present invisible, to subdue and kill his worldly Lusts, and to tear the dearest Objects of Affection from his Heart, whenever they come to be inconsistent with his Duty; Matt. 5. 29. *to pluck out a right eye, and to cut off a right hand, and to mortify all our members upon earth,* Colos. 3. 5. *and to cleanse our selves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit,* in expectation of, and in dependence upon Promises hereafter, which will have no Completion in this World. And can such Arguments as these take hold of a Man whose Mind is entirely Earthly and Sensual? 'Tis impossible they ever can in his present state, and lest perhaps they should hereafter, he is resolv'd to keep them off at a Distance from his Thoughts, and to give the powers of Heb. 6, 5. *the world to come* no Advantage upon him, by a nearer Conversation within the reach of their influence; since they come to robb him of his present Satisfaction, and he neither knows, nor desires to be acquainted with any better. This is the *true state of the Case*, and these

these that I have mention'd are the Reasons, that, to their own infinite Unhappiness, keep off all Men from an acquaintance with those Things, which it most of all concerns them to know and consider *well*, the great Truths of Religion, and their own indispensable Obligations to Obey them. I have almost only mention'd these things, it not being so agreeable to my present Argument to stand long to expose the Absurdity of them; and then *this* is so very Clear and Evident upon the slightest Reflection, that there is no need of doing so.

I now proceed in the *Second* place, to shew after what *Manner*, and in what *Instances* more especially, Men express this their love to *Darkness*, which our Saviour here so severely charges them with, in my Text, and by what Methods they proceed to Deceive and Abuse themselves, in the great Concernments of Religion: And these in general (to which the rest may be reduc'd) are Two,

First, by keeping themselves under a gross and affected Ignorance of the Doctrines, and Obligations of Christianity; or,

Secondly, by a corrupt and perverse Interpretation of them; and so disappointing them in their main Design, the Reformation of Mens Lives. And this latter I call *Error* in contradistinction to *Ignorance*, which is the mere absence and privation of Truth, and supposes no determination in the Mind, one way or the other, either for, or against a Thing; but *Error* is a great deal more, and implies something of a positive Nature, to wit, wrong resolutions of Judgment and Opinion, about those Things that are the Subject of our Thoughts.

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And *First*, Men express what our Saviour here stiles their *love of darkness*, by keeping themselves under a gross and voluntary Ignorance of the Affairs of Religion: Which by sad Experience we may be convinc'd 'tis possible for Men to do, even in a Christian Community, where yet the Doctrines of Religion are perpetually press'd and inculcated, and where even, as the *Prophet* expresses it, *The whole*
Isaiah 11. 9. *land is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;* where Instruction abounds, and where Wisdom and Understanding, in the Language of the *Wise Man*, utter their
Prov. 1. 20, 21. *voice in the streets,* and meet a Man almost at every corner, in the *chief places of concourse, and in the opening of the gates:* Yet even under all these Great and Numerous Advantages of Knowledge, how many Men pass on their whole Lives under a *supine negligence of Spirit*, without ever coming to a true Information of Religion and their Duty. I don't speak this only of the poor labouring illiterate part of Mankind, who are diverted and harass'd by the Necessities of Life, and unqualified by the dullness and slowness of Apprehension, to arrive at any great Perfection of Knowledge; but even some Men of refin'd Parts, and curious Reflection in other Matters, yet when you enter with them upon a discourse of Religion, they betray such an *inadvertence*, such an *unapprehension* of Soul, even in the plain Truths and Doctrines of Christianity, that a Man would stand surpriz'd, and hardly think so great an Ignorance under such happy Opportunities possible in *Nature*, if he did not find it true in *Fact*. And what should be the
Reason

Reason of this, but that these Men have entertain'd some secret *Lust*, or vicious Inclination, which turns away their Minds from beholding the Truth, and *hides knowledge from their Eyes*. And then let a Man's parts and faculties be what they will, if he will not reflect and consider, there is no remedy, he must continue Ignorant: Especially in matters of Religion, that relate almost purely to *another World*, and lie so quite cross to the main Designs and Interests of *this*. In these things, that concern our Spiritual Estate, there is more than ordinary Attention requir'd to give a Man a true Sense and Apprehension of them, even under the same and equal Advantages. Because the Minds of the Generality of Men lie under great moral Indispositions, and have need to be thoroughly awaken'd, and are perpetually apt to *start* and *fly* off from Considerations of a Nature so little grateful to their present Sense: So that, before Men's Minds will be duely prepar'd for the reception of these things, and become of *quick understanding in the fear of the Lord*, as the Prophet *Isaiah* styles it, there are a great many Preparations necessary; a great many Prejudices to be remov'd, and Mistakes and false Views in the Notion of Good and Happiness to be rectify'd, and Men are to be deliver'd from under the wrong Byass of their false and vicious Interests, and to be at least under an Indifferency, in order to their receiving Benefit from Instructions of this Nature. And because most Men will not be at the pains with themselves, to bring their Minds to this Frame and Temper I have mention'd, there lies the unhappy Ground of that *Dark-*

SERM. IV. *ness* and Ignorance of their Duty; the sad effects of which discover themselves so much in their Practice, and the ill Conduct of their Lives.

The *Second Step* Men take to *wrapp* themselves in *Darkness*, and to be secure from the uneasy convictions of *Light* and *Truth*, under a sinful State of Life, is by a corrupt and perverse Interpretation of the *Doctrines* and *Principles* of Religion, by this means to break the Force, and disappoint the main Design of Religion, the *Reformation* of their Lives. And this is their great Sin of *Error*, as the former was of *Ignorance*, but both arise from the same ill Principle, the same *root of Bitterness in their Soul*; both proceed with the same Design, and determine in the same miserable Event, which is to sin on without Disturbance or Molestation. Ill Men contrive to throw Dirt upon the *Beauty of Holiness*, to *Stain* and *Sully* Religion by a *perverse Handling* of it, so to bring it to their own Humour, and to an *Aspect* favourable on their own ill Practices. And that no part of it may escape the Pollution of their Hands, they endeavour to *blacken* and *traduce* it in both its Capacities, its *Precepts* of Life, and its *Doctrines of Belief*.

And *First* its *Precepts* they endeavour to evacuate, by a vain Pretence, that they direct us far above our Strength, above all the Proportion, and all Assistances of Human Nature. That in the Sense they generally *are*, and, as we say, *ought* to be understood, they are all *Hard Sayings*, that no Man is able to support the Weight and Burthen of them; That to comply with them in a strict and rigorous Sense,

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Sense, would be to renounce all the Pleasures and Comfort of Living, and to be at a continual Contest and Struggle with our selves; That God and Nature never put such Strong Inclinations into our Souls only to Rack and Torture us, by a violent Restraint and Confinement of them, and therefore that these strong Natural, *as they say*, and, *as we are sure*, *Vicious Propensities*, are plain Indications that the God and Author of Nature intended we should gratify them to the full; and consequently, to assert that God Almighty has bound up our Liberty, from what he has given us such eager and passionate Desires after, is to represent him as a *cruel and hard Master*, that intends only to *mock* us, and sport himself in the *misery* of his Creatures. Such as these are the vain *Apologies* that Men of loose and profligate Lives make to hide and palliate their Vices. And are not all these so many plain Calumnies upon Religion, and the Holy Word of God? What is there to be found in the whole Rule of our Duty, which it would not be the Beauty and Perfection of our Nature to observe? Does the *Merciful God* demand any thing of us above our Natural Strength, but *where* he takes care by his *Holy Spirit* to provide us with a *Principle of Grace* more than equal to any difficulty we meet with? *He that is in you is greater than he that is in the world*, says the blessed Apostle. Nor does God forbid us any *pleasure*, which it would not really be for our hurt to enjoy; and what we part with of this Nature for his Sake he makes us infinitely more than amends for, in the peace and satisfaction of our own Consciences, in

SERMON IV. those *joyous* and *blissful* Reflections, that by our Obedience we are intitled to his *Favour*,
Psal. 63. 3. which is above all Pleasures, even *better than Life* it self. So that these Reflections upon Religion, as it is the Rule of our Practice, appear from hence, to be mere impudent Slanders, the *prophane suggestions* of a *corrupt and naughty Heart*, and the *sad and deplorable Consequences* of an *impure and sinful Life*; as I could easily shew more at large, were it so immediately to my present Purpose; which is not so much at this time to *disprove*, as to *represent* before you the false Accounts these Men give of our Religion, and for what Reasons; and by which they impose upon themselves, and *corrupt others*, in these their *wicked*
Psal. 73. 8. *blasphemies*, and *talking against the most high God*; the main and original Design of which, is to screen themselves from the guilty Reflections of their own Consciences, and the just Reproaches of the World for living as they do. For if they can but once perswade themselves and others of the Truth of these Loose and Atheistical Cavillings at Religion, the main Difficulty, they know, is over, and the great Objection against a wicked and sensual Life answer'd, and disappointed of its Force: Because *then* the Comparison between their *Life* and the *Rule* of it will be less *Odious*, the more they can bend and ply that *Rule* to their own vicious Humour and Interests: According to the grave Advice of that Famous *Cardinal*, whose *holy Counsel* it was, That since Men's Lives could not come up to the strictness of Religion, therefore they must try to bring down Religion to their Lives: In which Assertion of
his,

Card. Pallavini, Hist. Concil. Trident.

his, I dare say, he gave a true Account of his **SERM. IV.**
own Religion, and spoke the real *Sense* and
Aim of all *Loose, Profligate, Atheistical Wretches*
like himself.

But Men of this Stamp and Character are not satisfied only to wrest and pervert Religion and the Holy Scriptures, as they stand the Rule of our practical Duty, and we hope ever will do so, notwithstanding the wicked Attempts of these Wretches to the contrary; But the *Articles* of our *Holy Faith* too must suffer a Diminution by their means, must be scann'd by the partial Enquiries of these Men, and *sifted* with their *sieve of vanity*; and the infinite Knowledge and Wisdom of God himself must not be allow'd to Understand and Reveal any thing, but what the *scanty* Mind of Man, even the blind, prejudic'd, benighted Understandings of these *sinners against their own souls*, may be able to Comprehend. Our *Faith* must be made out upon Principles of Human Reason, or they won't accept of it. Nothing must be admitted in Religion, that is not of a level to the Natural, that is, (as the case now stands, and as we know) the deprav'd Sense of Mankind. All *Mysteries* must be discarded as Impositions upon Human Understanding; These Men are the great *Rescuers* and *Deliverers* of the World from *Error* and Prejudice, from the cruel Yoke and Tyranny of *Faith*, into the spacious Liberty of *Nature*, and the Benefits of a *reasonable Service*. They must have a Religion that is easy, and more suitable to Men's Inclinations, that is, their *Vices*; not one like ours, that is stiff and sullen, and inflexible, bound upon us by the strongest, and
on

SERM. IV.

on one side, the most terrible Sanctions; but they must have a *Religion* that is more Compliant, and Manageable upon fit Occasions, and one that, when Men have a Mind to give themselves a *Licence* in their *Practice*, will admit of a *loose* in its *Interpretation*; These are the impious Demands of these Men, their vain Pretences, and the dangerous Ends they aim at, in spreading their poisonous Infections. And is it out of any real design, though even of mistaken Charity to Mankind, that these Men pretend to set up for the great *Doctors* and *Masters* of Truth themselves, and come to set others free from the *Usurpations* of *Faith* and *Conscience*, as they love to speak? Is it not for their own base Ends and Interest, for peace and security in their own belov'd, detestable Vices, that they endeavour thus to undermine our Faith? Is it not to *Entrench* and *Fortify* themselves in those Sins, which they are secretly determin'd not to leave? They know that every *Article* of our *Faith* is a standing Protestation against them, as long as it prevails in the true Catholick Sense of it, and will be an eternal Reproach and Rebuke upon their wicked and impious Lives. But if they could be once allow'd to *debase* and *alloy* our Faith, by taking it in their own Sense, which they pretend is the only *reasonable* one, their main business would be done, and the Truths and Mysteries of Religion render'd as tame and quiet, and passive, and ineffectual as they could wish, quite drain'd and dispirited of all their ancient Strength and Vertue, and utterly despoil'd of all those powerful Motives, by which now, *thanks be to God*, they inforce Obedience upon

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upon the *Lives* of Men, with so much awe and authority upon the Conscience. I shall only give an Instance of this, in one Article of our Faith, that Great and Fundamental one of the *Divinity of the Son of God*; The Denial, or erroneous Exposition of which *shakes* the very *Frame* of our Religion, and draws after it almost the Ruin of the whole *Christian Practice*. For by disowning Christ to be the *natural and only begotten Son of the Father*, we extremely sink and diminish the Price and Value of his sufferings for Sin, and this will tend to give us the less *abhorrence* of Evil, and we shall be with less difficulty reconcil'd to it in our Practice, when we consider it was bought off at so easy a purchase. Whereas a right belief in this matter casts the blackest *odium* and reflection upon Sin that can be, and represents it as the extremest Evil; the guilt of which no less than the *blood* of the *Son of God himself* could expiate. And then to suppose our Saviour a mere Man like our Selves, would be very much to weaken the Awe and Authority of his Laws, and this would be a *chill* and damp upon our Obedience. Besides we shou'd by this Error *disarm* our *Judge*, in a great measure, of that Terrour and Vengeance with which now we believe him *cloath'd*; and which we are sure is infinite; the *fiery* consequences of which we cannot hope to escape without a careful obedience to his Laws. And how could we think that a Man only equal in Nature to our Selves, should have that *Power* and *Interest* in the Court of Heaven, as we are told our Saviour has? And to make a question of this, would be to lessen our dependence upon his Intercession, and

Isa. 59. 17.

and very much abate our lively expectation of rewards and blessings from his hands; which are some of the main *sinews* of our obedience, as well as the chiefest *instances* of it. 'Twere easy to pursue this Argument farther, and to shew how it holds proportionably true in all other *Articles* of our most *Holy Faith*, a right understanding of, and assent to which afford the main Spring and Encouragement to a *Holy Life*, and give the greatest discountenance and terrour to an *evil one* that can be. This, I think, is a plain account of that desperate Malice, that the Enemies of Vertue and Religion entertain, and express against the Doctrines and Mysteries of Christianity. Who because they can't be quite *Ignorant* of these things, they meet with them so often, and are encountred with their evidence at every turn, they therefore take another way to deal with them, to break and invalidate their force, by blending and polluting the light of these Heavenly Truths with their own evil Opinions; thus to cast a veil of *darkness* both over the truth and themselves, in order to excuse, or palliate their own corruptions.

And thus I have endeavour'd to shew that a Man's Sins and Vices will either make him oppose his Religion, or turn away his Eyes from it: And what do these Men do in effect, but deal with our Blessed Saviour, as that *foolish* People in the *Gospel* did, when his Power prov'd Destructive to their Swine that *perished in the waters*? When ever Christ comes in the way of these Sinners, either by his Word, or by his Ministers, and would remove and cure their Brutish Inclinations; as he makes his Ap-
proaches

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proaches towards them, they go out to meet **SERM IV.**
him, as that People did, not to conduct him in,
but to prevent and stop his further progress,
and, like them also, when they see him, they de-
fire him that he would depart out of their coast: **Mat. 8. 34.**

And, with the prophane Libertine, in **Job, Job 21. 14.**
they say unto God, Depart from us, for we
desire not the knowledge of thy ways. From
which so grievous Sin of these Men, and
the dreadful Consequences of it, the removal
and desertion of God's Grace and Holy Spirit in
this World, and an eternal Banishment from his
glorious Presence in the World to come, God
of his infinite Mercy deliver us all, for Jesus
Christ his sake, to Whom with the Father and
the Blessed Spirit, be rendered all Praise, Honour
and Glory, Might, Majesty, and Dominion,
throughout all Churches of the Saints, now and
for ever. Amen.

A SERMON *Preach'd*

*A return to our former good Old Principles
and Practice, the only way to restore and
preserve our Peace.*

A
S E R M O N

*Preach'd Before the
University of OXFORD*

At St. MART's,
On Sunday, May the 14th 1710.

The Fifth Edition.

JEREMIAH VI. 16.

*Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways
and see, and ask for the old paths, where is
the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall
find rest for your Souls:—*

THESE words, we see, are deliver'd
in God's own immediate *Name*, as
well as by his *Authority*, to the Na-
tion of the Jews; and intimate to us the ex-
ceeding greatness of *Corruption*, that had
grown amongst that People, in that they here
express the Remedy for it, with so much ad-
dress of Affection and Concern: *Thus saith
the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask
for the old paths, where is the good way, im-
plying*

plying that they were quite out of the way, at present, and had been so for a long season: and that it was now a matter of no less difficulty in it self, than of moment and importance to their happiness, to reduce and set them right. And therefore 'tis, we find God here by the Prophet applies himself to them in terms of such pathetic earnestness; that he sets all their *Activity* to work, and employs their utmost force of enquiry, in search after the Truth, from which they were gone off; and were now by an inveterate depravation, both in Knowledge and Practice, quite grown stiff in Error, and, as it seems, hardly to be recover'd. That they were so indeed, we need no farther evidence, than to look back to the Three former Verses before my Text: Where the Prophet *sadly* complains of an universal Degeneracy in all Orders and Degrees of Men, and almost a total Forfeiture of the Primitive *Integrity* of their Religion. In the 13th Verse he tells them, and us, that *from the least of them even to the greatest of them, every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest, every one dealeth falsely*: Their *Laiety*, it seems, from the Peasant to the Noble-Man, were wholly set upon corrupt Practices of Oppression, Fraud, and Bribery; and the *Church-Men* themselves had given too much occasion, and countenance to these *Sins of the People*, by their own Example and Authority; by soothing great and bad Men in their Vices, for their own private Ends and Ambition; and by taking all opportunities to assure them there was no *Danger*, when they were just upon

SERMON V. upon the very edge of Ruine: For so it follows, Verse 14th, They, that is, the Priests and Prophets, have *beat'd also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, peace, peace, when there was no peace*: Telling them, that all was *safe and flourishing*, and that to follow the Courses and Principles they were engag'd in at present, was the only true way to *settle the Nation*, and secure the Interest both of publick and private Happiness; for so much, I think, the repetition of the word *Peace* may very well import to us.

And yet as bad as we see they were, and are assur'd by God's own Authority they were, they had not the least *sense or feeling* of it; not so much *modesty* left them, as to acknowledge they had ever been in the *wrong*; And tho' the Prophet by his Threatenings thunder'd in their Ears, and remonstrated against them in God's Name never so loudly, yet there was no coming at them; they had not the least resentment either of their Sin or Danger; their *Principles* were so quite perverted, their *Apprehension* strongly barr'd against all Re-
proof, and their *Attention* quite retir'd and *lull'd* in the deepest Security. For were they *asham'd*, that is, both People and Priests together, *when they had committed Abomination*?

Verse 15. Nay, they were not at all *asham'd*, neither could they *blush*.

To such a wretched state were things reduc'd, that there was hardly any Foundation remaining, any good *Old Principles* enough left amongst that People, to reform them on. He that would make them better, must begin with them entirely anew, quite rip up and unravel

travel their present inbred settled Notions of **SERMLV.**
Good and Evil, and implant even the very first
 original Seeds of Vertue and Goodness in
 their Souls. So much indeed as this they
 stood in need of, and 'tis no less than this, that
 God himself directs them to, in the former
 part of my Text: *Thus saith the Lord, stand
 ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths,
 where is the good way, and walk therein;* that
 is, put an immediate stop to all your present
 Proceedings, for every step, you take now, is
 out of the way; go back to the place from
 whence you first set out; and since there are
 so many ways of Sin and Error, and but one
 of Truth, stand a while at the Head of all
 these Paths, and consider with your selves the
 extreme danger of mistaking, and that 'tis a
 point of infinite Concernment to you, that
 you determine your selves to the right: *Stand
 in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths,
 where is the good way and walk therein, and ye
 shall find rest to your Souls.*

What was the Consequence and Issue of this
 Advice, we may see at the latter end of *this*,
 and in the following Verse; but that is not my
 present Business to consider.

From the Words I have now read before
 you, I think these *Four* following Obser-
 vations do very naturally arise.

First, That God here by his Prophet puts
 that People upon so very strict and diligent a
 search and enquiry for the Truths of Religion;
 argues an entire Corruption and Apostacy in
 the main Body of that Nation, from the true
 Knowledge and Practice of their Duty: That
 they

SERM. V. they had even lost the very first *Elements* of Vertue, and were perfectly at a stand and puzzled, to find out the good old Rules and Principles of Duty, by which their *Foresathers*, for so many Ages, had so happily guided and govern'd their Steps: *Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way.*

Secondly, We may observe the Matter and Subject of all this Enquiry here enjoyn'd them, the Old Truths and Principles of Religion, to which the Prophet here directs them; under which Head I think it will not be unnecessary to shew what advantage of Argument the former prevailing *Authority* and *Antiquity* of a Religious Doctrine has, to its being found and good, above any *new-stamp'd* modern Pretences whatsoever; *See and ask for the old paths, where is the good way.*

Thirdly, We have here the proper End, and what ought to be the true Design of all our Enquiries and Discoveries in Religion, the right Government of our Lives and Practice by its Rules and Precepts: *See and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein.*

Fourthly, We see here the blessed Event and Consequence of such a Course propos'd; and what good Effects so *desirable* a return, both in Knowledge and Practice, would work for any People; a *restitution* of them from under their present deplorable distracted State, to their former happy Days, and quiet Enjoyment of Themselves and Country: That this is the *only* method to save them from their Ruine, and that nothing else will do it; *See and*

and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, **SERM. V.**
and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your
Souls.

And, *First*, that God here by his Prophet puts that People upon so very strict and diligent a Search and Enquiry after the Truth, argues an entire Corruption and Revolt, in the great Body of that Nation, from the true Knowledge and Practice of Religion; that they had lost the very *Elements* and first Principles of Vertue, and were perfectly at a stand and puzzled to find out the good old Laws and Rules of Duty, which their Forefathers had so long and so happily profess'd, and acted by. We find the Holy Prophets often lamenting the dismal Effects of a National Ignorance in Matters of Religion; and that Men's Minds were grown into such a *rust*, by not attending to the Light of Truth, or had contracted so perverse a *bent*, by acting contrary to it, that they could not tell how to take hold of them by any application whatsoever, nor knew where to begin their first *Instructions*; *Whom* Isa. 28. 9, 10. *shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine?* says *Isaiab*, *them that are rean'd from the milk, and drawn from the breast*; intimating to us, that hardly any of those of riper Years were capable of good Impressions, by reason of an old Stubborn Inclination they were under, from former Errors and Prejudices. And that even amongst those, who were in the best and nearest Preparation to this purpose, yet there was no small *difficulty* to be expected by the *Man* that should go about to teach them Knowledge, on
the

SERM. V. the account of their Weakness and Incapacity to receive it. *For precept, says the same Prophet, must be upon precept, line upon line; here a little, and there a little,* the same Instructions repeated over and over, and broken into minute and small portions, for fear of overcharging their Apprehension. And this general *Apostacy* from the Truth, this Night of Ignorance, that spread it self over *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, where yet the Law of God had publick Authority, and prevail'd, at least in the open profession of it, was yet so very great, that it had *wrapt* every Order and Distinction of Men under its gloomy covert;

Jer. 5. 4. 5. as we are assur'd by the Prophet *Jeremy* in other places, besides the Chapter of my Text. In one, he had observ'd the gross Ignorance, and corruption of Manners that prevail'd amongst the common People, and was

Isa. 1. 4. weary to see it: He makes the best excuse for them however that he could, and says, *Surely these are poor, they are foolish for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God*; that is, they had not those Opportunities, on account of the meanness of their Fortunes and Condition, to attain to any great Knowledge in the Affairs of Religion, that lay so quite beside their common and ordinary Conversation. But from Men of *Birth* and *Quality*, and *Capacity* and Opportunities of *Learning*, he expected other matters, as he tells us himself: *I will get me unto the great Men*, says he, *and will Speak unto them, for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God*; that is, they very well might and should have known it: But what account does

does he return us of *these* Men? why, that *these had altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds*; tho' they knew the Laws of God, and their Duty better than most other Men did, yet they look'd upon them as too great Restraints and Confinements on their Liberty, and *disdain'd*, and were impatient to get loose from under the *Yoke and Obligation*. And because there was no other way for them to be easy under these Resolutions, and this Temper of Mind, than either not to *think* at all of Religion, or to bring themselves to a *stubborn disbelief* of it, for that reason, and from what we see some Men of their *Posterity and Quality* follow at this day, we may easily guess what Methods they took in order to so very *Honourable* a Design.

We see then, how great a swerving and declension there was from the Truth of Religion, both in the Principles and Manners of Men, in the Jewish Church and Nation, at the time, when God thought it necessary, by the *Power* of his *Spirit* in his Prophet *Jeremiah*, to *stir up and awaken* the Sense of the Kingdom, by his bold and resolute protesting against the Vices and Corruptions of the Times he liv'd in; in whatsoever *Order or Character* of Men they were found, whether in Church or State. And this he went on to do, notwithstanding their defiance of his Authority, their secret Threats or more open Combinations against his Person, or any Pains or Dangers he sustain'd at their Hands in the steady prosecution of his Duty. For to that purpose indeed, God had some time before *prepar'd* and Strengthen'd him, when he gave

SERM. V. him his Prophetical Commission, at his very entrance on his Office; as we read in the first Chapter of his Prophecy, 17, 18, and 19th Verses: *Thou therefore gird up thy loins, says God to him, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismay'd at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the Land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee.* And so we are sure he has always been, and, we may depend upon it, ever will be. with those his faithful Servants, who shall dare maintain his Cause, the Cause of Truth and Right, at the expence of their own present Ease, Interest and Safety, whatever secret or open Counsel of wicked Men, may rise against them, or howsoever any powerful Combination of Worldly Politicians may contrive to overthrow them.

And as long as every Church and Kingdom is liable to the same Disorders and moral Distempers, in the Frame and Constitution of it, that we are sure, the Jewish labour'd under: As long as there may be Reasons of State and Government, or present Safety, that may seem to make it necessary sometimes, that there should be a wry Turn given to the Principles of Religion, by a sort of Men who have Themselves before acted contrary to it; and who would be otherwise very Uneasy, and sling about them with Impatience, if Religion should be

be kept up in its pure genuine Truth and SERM.V.
Lustre, to their utter Shame and Condem-
 nation; *As long as Men of little, or no Religion*
themselves, in point of Principles, and of
loose and profligate Lives, in point of Practice,
 may have it in their Power to joyn their mu-
 tual Assistance to encourage one another, and
 to corrupt the rest of the World, and to run
 down and discountenance the Truth of God,
 and the Professors of it: *As long as most Men's*
secular Advantages may lie at the controul and
disposal of others, that mind their own things Phil. 2. 21.
only, and are not heartily affected to the In-
terests of Religion: As long as these things
may be so; so long we are sure the Church of
God must be in Danger of general, grievous;
and disastrous Corruptions: And so long, there
will always need some Men of shining Piety,
of a sublime and generous Zeal for the Honour
of God and Religion, who shall dare appear,
be able to oppose, and effectually give a Stand
to the Torrent of Iniquity, which is ready to
overwhelm the Age: and without such Men,
we may hope and pray, that God will never
leave his Church, in the times of her Desti-
tution, and Calamity, whensoever they shall
happen: Such true sons of our Holy Mother the
Church, of her own bringing up, and nursing by
her side, that have been dandled upon her knees, Isa. 66. 11, 12.
and suck'd the breasts of her purest Doctrine,
that, in the day of her Enemies, shall own
her, shall take her by the hand, be her true
Support in Weakness; guide and direct her to
the means of her Recovery, and lead her in
the ways of Truth and Peace. Which brings
 me to my Second Observation from the Text.

SERMON V. *Namely, The method the Holy Prophet here prescribes to the Jewish Church and Nation, for a remedy for all those fatal Disorders they were under; and what was to be the great subject Matter of all their Search and Enquiries, to wit, the old Truths and Principles of Religion; Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way. Under which Head I cannot but think it necessary, to consider what advantage of Argument, the former prevailing Authority, and Antiquity of a Doctrine of Religion has, to its being sound and good; For so we find both Characters here joyn'd together by the Holy Prophet, See and ask for the old paths, where is the good way.*

Not that all ways are good which are Old, neither; for then Idolatry might claim a right of Prescription, in comparison of what has been Since, to be the Religion of the World; it having continued longer, and with less Interruption in most parts of the Earth, and made a more Universal Spread than any one at present. And yet we know that the true worship of God, takes place even of that, in point of Antiquity, and was deriv'd down through one line at least, from the Creation of the World to the Flood; and from thence to Abraham the Father of the Faithful, in whose Family it took up its perpetual abode, till the fulness of time was come, at the appearance of our blessed Saviour. So that still we see that the good paths of Duty are the oldest too, and have the Precedence in point of Time, as well as of Perfection. And since the Reformation of the World, by the Gospel of our Lord, we must date the Truth and Authority of Religion from the

the *Antiquity* of it; because 'tis impossible that any *Doctrine* or *Precept* of Religion should be true, that was not at first deliver'd by *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and maintain'd by the first and purest Ages of the Church. And therefore all other more modern Pretences, how *enlightening* soever they may seem, are but Innovations of Men of *corrupt Minds* and base Interests, Sway'd by their Pride, or ^{2 Tim. 3. 8.} Passion, or Lust, or Humour to wrest, and pervert, and *barter* the Word of God in order to raise themselves a *Character*, or to *flatter* and ^{2 Cor. 2. 17.} comply with other Men's Vices, thereby to procure their own *Advancement*. Such are all those novel Expositions of the Articles of our Church and Holy Faith, that have appear'd of late amongst us; which speak in a language unknown to *Antiquity*, which break up the *old Foundations*, and put the Strength of Christianity upon the *Sandy* bottom of new, weak, subtle and trifling Arguments, which serve only to betray it; That under a pretence of late Improvements, and a more perfect way of *Reasoning*, have endeavour'd to Slurr and Slight the Doctrines of our Religion, and Mysteries of our Faith, which stand upon the Authority of God Himself.

But where is now that *Beauty of Holiness*, that *primitive venerable Simplicity* of Religion, under which *Christianity* appear'd in Times of *Old*, adorn'd like a *reverend Matron*, with a *native Strength* and *Grace*, inimitable by all the Tricks and Refinements of these *Gentlemen of Reason*! But now we have her trimm'd like a *strange woman*, in the attire of a *harlot*, painted with false Colours, and dress'd in all
the

SERMON V. the wantonness of Men's extravagant Schemes and Fancies; sunk from that Reverence and Dignity, by which she once struck an awful Love upon the Eyes of all that beheld her; and made now basely to serve with men's sins, and to truckle under their unrighteous Designs and vicious Interests. Take but the Church of England, as it stood from the First Days of Queen Elizabeth, till about the Death of Charles the Martyr, and how unlike Her self does she now appear! That Her primitive Fathers and Pastors would not know Her; the Strength and Sinews of Her Discipline so broken, the pure Fountains of Her Doctrine so polluted, so many of those who attend Her Altars, and act in Her sacred Rites and Mysteries, so utterly gone off, and estrang'd in their Principles from Her; and going so directly counter to Her Tenets, and dearest Safety in their Practice! But if ever we would again be a wise and happy People, 'tis thither we must return from whence we are fallen; *Antiquam exquirite matrem: Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest to your souls*——.

It ought in reason to be one Objection with us against any Doctrine or Interpretation in Points of Religion, that 'tis New; that 'twas never broach'd before, nor receiv'd in any Churches of the Saints; that we can see no clear undoubted Authority for it in the Word of God; That the Passages alledg'd thence to confirm it are *dubious*, or appear in its Favour *forc'd* and *violent*; That Men may have present Designs of their own to serve by it; and that

that the *Corruptions* of the Times we live in **SERM. V.** may give too much Countenance to it, and have made it perhaps *beneficial*, or almost *necessary* to be advanc'd, in order to take off the Reproach and Scandal of *former Practices*, or to justify the Iniquity of the *present*: These are the Exceptions that any new Doctrines and Expositions in Religion are justly liable to; and therefore without the clearest Reason in the World, no wise Man would easily entertain them; there being so great an hazard in doing so, (especially when they appear *against*, as well as *without* the Authority of ancient Times) whatever seeming *Subtilties* or *Niseries* of *Argumentation*, may be made use of by Men of Parts to support and promote them.

But now the primitive Truths of Religion carry a *plainness* and *veneration* in their Face; have good *Reason*, as well as the best *Authority* to shew for them; are not wrapt up in, nor to be drawn out of, the *thin Cobwebs* of *School Distinctions*; not intricate and intangled with Difficulties and Perplexities, that *witty Men* may make, and *wise Men* do not care to answer; but they are easy and level to common Apprehension; being intended by the Mercy and Goodness of Almighty God for the general Benefit and Happiness of Mankind; so that *he that runs may read them, and the wayfaring Man, though a fool, cannot err therein.* *Isa. 35. 8.*

I do not say, that the *newness* of any Doctrine is a sufficient Reason why Men should immediately reject it; unless it carries an open Absurdity in it, and a plain Inconsistence with the *Analogy* of Faith. But 'tis certainly *Rom. 12. 6.*
one

SERMON V. *one of the best Reasons in the World for our Caution, and utmost Examination of it; and that we take care we are not fond of embracing it, out of an itch and humour of Novelty; till we see much better Arguments for it, than we are sure there are against it; especially when the whole weight of Authority leans quite on the other side of the Question. And if it comes with no better Authority than of the Men that first advanced it; and does not bring with it indisputable Reason; to balance the Authority of our own excellent Church, the primitive Church, and all the best Churches in the World; he, that shall then demand other Men's Submission to his Doctrine of this nature, only shews the greatness of his own Modesty, and may, no doubt, expect to meet with a suitable Entertainment from the World.*

And yet we know, how by the cunning and artful Sophistry of a late Writer, (whose Name is deservedly Odious amongst good Men) and his vain and empty Appearance of close Reasoning, upon a wrong and rotten Foundation, one of the principal Doctrines of Christianity, and of the Church of England, has been shaken, and almost subverted: Had not the Good Providence of God stepp'd in to prevent it, in a great measure, by the Sufferings of Another; Sufferings, somewhat like those the Doctrine it self teaches, and like those, by which it was at first promoted in the early Preachers of the Gospel.

But this comes of that proud conceited Humour, that fulness of Spirit, that prevails so much of late, in one Sort of Men; and from their Setting up only for themselves, and rejecting

jecting all manner of Authority whatsoever *SERM. V.*
 they don't like; that is, all the *Opinions* of all
the wise and good Men in the World, even of
 the Church of God it self, and relying only on
 their own *shallow, empty, bloated Reason*. By
 which means, some of these admir'd Gentle-
 men run into downright Heresy; others have
 entertain'd such a *Latitude* in *Opinions*:
 Others, such a sett of *odd, singular, separating*
Nations, as are both to their own great Un-
 happiness, and odious and offensive to all the
 World, besides themselves.

These Men tell us, they will take nothing
 upon *Authority*; I wish they would not in
 some cases, and then we should not so often
 see them follow others, as they now do, with
 no better Reason. But is the *Authority* of the
Church of God in all former Ages, and the
 present, nothing? Are the *Opinions* of all
 the wise and good Men that have been in the
 World before us to be rejected, because these
 Men were not the first Inventers of them? If
 an Opinion of the Church, universally re-
 ceiv'd in former and present Times, had not
 much reason otherwise on its side, yet if it
 had no Reason to shew in the least *against* it;
 that I am sure a modest and ingenuous Man
 would think a very good Reason for it; (I am
 sure the *Apostle* thought so in this case) at
 least, it is a *Reason*, why a Man should not
 pertly, and forwardly, and impudently Oppose
 it; and betray his own want of Sense and Mo-
 desty, by running so directly cross to that of
 all Mankind besides.

1 Cor. II. 16.

Authority, 'tis true, must never prevail *against*
 clear Reason, let it be never so ancient; but
 when

SERM. V.

when there is no Reason against a Doctrine, and (which is our case) the best Reason in the World for it, and the whole *Stream of Antiquity* flowing in to us besides, he, that does not satisfy himself to believe as other Men do in this case, whatever Specious Pretences he may make, does not so much intend to *improve*, as to *perplex* and intangle the Truth; nor does he really discover his Charity to Mankind, by venting and propagating his new, raw, indigested Notions, but his *Pride*, and *Singularity*, and Conceitedness of his own Reason. I have stay'd too long on this point, tho' I am sensible, it was never more necessary and seasonable than at present.

I come now to my *Third* Observation from the Words of my Text, what is the proper *End*, and ought to be the true Design of all our Enquiries and Discoveries in Religion, the right Government of our Lives and Practice by its Rules and Precepts, when we are once rightly inform'd of them in our Minds and Judgments: *See and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein*: For without this, our Knowledge is our Reproach, and good Principles the greatest marks of Shame we can carry about us; rendering our *Faults* and *Miscarriages* the more *Notorious*, our *Persons* *inexcusable*, and our *Characters* *inconsistent*. Without this, how *high-flown* soever we may be in our Professions, how *Zealous* soever in our Protestations, how *active* soever in our Prosecutions of an honest Cause, we are yet still but *Hypocrites* in *disguise*, and do our excellent Church and Religion more real *Disgrace* and *Disservice*, by the Looseness of

of our Example, than we can do it good by **SERMON V.**
all our Interest, our Places, our Power and Authority.

Don't we see, by a *late* Instance, how ready Prophane and Atheistical Men are, (as they have always been) to stain and slur a *good Cause* it self, by endeavouring to fix an immoral, tho' undeserv'd Character on the Person that appear'd in the Defence and Support of it; by translating their own Sins and real Shame on a *Man* so much better than Themselves. In which malicious Design of theirs, we know, and may thank God, they were so happily mistaken this time, and hope they will always be so, in any other case of a like nature, as well as in the Success of all their own ill Designs at all times. But still we must own, these Men were very much in the right in the general (however mistaken in the particular Application) that the nearest and most probable way to cast a foul *aspiration* and blot on a good Cause is to weaken the *good Opinion*, and to sink the *Authority* of those that are concern'd in its Defence, by reflecting on their *Morals*. And if so, *what manner of Persons then ought we to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness*, not knowing how soon we may be call'd to answer for the Truths of our Religion before *Men*; and, we may be sure, not long after, at the *awful Tribunal* of God, the Judge of all Men, for the Scandal we shall otherwise have given to Religion, by our careless or profligate Demeanour.

Surely a warm, zealous, lewd, vicious *Church of England Man*, is one of the greatest Contradictions in the World. To hear a Man
talk

SER M. V. talk loosely and prophanely, swear and blaspheme, and at the same time Vow that he will *stand* by the Church's Cause as long as he lives, when he is ready to *fall* by his own Intemperance, is a thing so nauseous, that a Man must be past all *sense* and *apprehension* himself, that does not think his Company has *enough* left to take notice of it, and be offended at it; and if he knows they may be so, can he offer a greater *affront* to their Conversation? For God's Sake *then*, for the Sake of our *Holy Religion*, for our own Sake, for our *Enemies* Sake, let us cut off this Handle, at least, from them that Hate us, and prevent all Exceptions of this sort however, against our selves. Let us endeavour to answer the Purity and Holiness of our Principles and Profession, by the Regularity and Exactness of our Manners. This God, we see, expects from us as the true end and issue of all our Studies and Improvements in Knowledge; and this we must do, if ever we intend to be really useful to our Country, or find any true Quiet, or well-grounded Satisfaction at home, within our own Breasts and Consciences. From whence I pass to my *Fourth* and *Last Observation* from the Text, What would be the blessed End and Consequence of such a Course, and what good Effects such a desirable *Return*, both in *Knowledge* and *Practice*, would work for us, a restitution of us from under our present deplorable distracted State, to our former happy Days and peaceful Enjoyment of our Selves and Country; that this is the only method to save us from our Ruine, and that nothing else will do it: *See, and ask for the old paths, where is the good*

good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find *SERM. V.*
 rest to your Souls. If ever we desire to be a 
 free and happy People, the Truth, as our *John 8. 32.*
 Blessed Saviour tells us, must make us so;
 Ignorance and Error, Disquiet and Perplexi-
 ty being inseparable Companions; the for-
 mer filling either the publick or private state
 of Man, where-ever they reside, with the
 latter, with Disorder and Confusion, and e-
 very thing that is Evil. *There is no peace, Isa. 57. 20. 21*
saith my God, to the wicked; and again, the
wicked are like a troubled sea, when it cannot
rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. A
 Man under the Possession of *perverse* and
reprobate Principles is in a violent State, car-
 ried by a wrong *biass*, and can never be easie,
 either to himself or others. All Error is a
restless and *turbulent* thing, perpetually work-
 ing in the *lees*, and always changing, and
 shifting from one Point of the Compass to
 another, because it can find no fix'd Central
 rest in any one. Whereas Truth is ever re-
 gular, and congenial with, and sits easie up-
 on the Mind of Man; and where-ever 'tis, it
 convinces, clears, calms and cherishes the
 Heart, on which it *shines*. But these are
 but *wide* and *general* Considerations. Let us
 now survey these Truths *exemplified* in *par-*
ticular, in the Publick State: Where we
 may see how mistaken and wrong Notions,
 in Religion or Politicks, quite *ravish* the *Bp. Wilkins*
Spheres of Government, and put them into a *Nat. Relig.*
preternatural course; tending continually to
disturb and *overturn* what is already settled,
 and being able to produce and establish no-
 thing.

L

When,

SERM. V.



When, *once*, our own happy Government, both in Church and State, were at *first* violently *shock'd*, and *then* push'd from their ancient *basis*, by the Roughness and Rebellion of those Times, the *genuine* Issue of those ill Principles some amongst us maintain at present; What Peace and Quiet was then in our Land? Was not *War* and *Strife* perpetually in our *Gates*? Could a Man go out, or come in with Safety? A Spirit of *Rout* and *Confusion* stalk'd up and down our Country, and *Ruin* and *Desolation* attended by its side! Religion and Liberty were the universal cry; but was there any thing *less* to be found amongst us? Every Man almost had his different Religion, and all of them in the wrong; and hardly any Man had the same a Month together: till Men were grown quite Sick and Giddy with *Revolutions* (which is the usual Effect of them indeed) and knew not *where* they stood, nor *what* they would be *changing* to. And shall we trust those dangerous *Tenets* again, and let the Folds of the *old Serpent* wind about us once more, till he has us *fast*, and may hurry us into Ruin?

Men may *fancy*, may *protest*, may *declare* what they please, that there is no *Danger*; but if a true and genuine Cause never fails to produce its Effect, when all Circumstances requisite for acting are in the way; we may then depend upon it, that those *Seditious*, *Republican*, *Atheistical*, *Impious* Notions, that have been so much of late *broach'd*, *promoted*, and *encourag'd* in our Land, are a *ferment* lay'd within our Bowels, which when

when once it has *spread*, and wrought it self S E R M. V.
to a *head*, must break out to the *endangering*
our whole *State*, if not to our final *Ruin*.

Yet we don't seem to be apprehensive of all this, and are angry with those that would awaken us into a sense of it! Under all these Weaknesses and Diminutions of our happy Establishment, we *fold our hands together*, and cry *peace, peace*, when there is no peace; and the *gray hairs* of our decay are here and Hos. 7. 9. there upon us, and we do not, we will not know it. But, * *O that men were wise, that* Deut. 32. 29. *they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!* what the end of these things will be, what it *must* be, without a timely Return to our first Principles of Religion and Loyalty, to a true Knowledge and Practice of our Duty!

'Tis certain we are strangely gone off from our *first love* to our Holy Mother the Church Rev. 2. 4. of England; and are *slidden back* by a perpetual *backsliding* for many Years together, Jer. 8. 5. encouraging one another, and comforting our selves in *running down* and disparaging those excellent Doctrines of our Religion, upon which our main Security depends; upon which the Reign and Safety of our Most Excellent Sovereign, The QUEEN (whom God for ever Bless and Prosper) Lam. 4. 20. the *Anointed of the Lord*, the *Breath of our Nostrils*, and the Welfare of all Her Kingdoms is supported.

* This is the true Interpretation of that place in Moses Song.

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Would any one have been bold to say, a few Years since, that we should have liv'd to see a *Doctrine* of Christianity, I mean that of *Non-resistance* to the Supreme Power; a *Doctrine* authoriz'd and acknowledg'd for Divine by the constant Practice and Preaching of the primitive Church; and from thence deriv'd down to our own Times through many Ages, without Dispute amongst those that held the * Truth; wrought into our own *Establishment* as a *strengthening* to the whole, *enacted* by the *legal Authority* of England; declar'd, acknowledg'd, and confirm'd by *both* our *Learned Universities*, yet to see this very *Doctrine* *spurn'd* at and *flourish'd*, by those Men, who say too, they have some Religion; to see it rejected by its *former Friends* and *Patrons*; to see it dragg'd out to its *Condemnation*, with *Shame* and *Contempt* by its *Enemies*, and *cenfur'd* as a Principle dangerous and *damnable*? If this be not something of a *Change* from what we were once, when or how shall we know there is any? or by what Signs or Tokens can we find it?

And yet this *Perfection* in *Revolt* we came to, by *gentle* and *leisurely* Measures; first, by *breaking* in upon our Rules a *little*, as the *exigency* of times seem'd to make it *necessary*; but at first we were *modest*: in the next place by *extenuating*, then by *justifying* our Faults, and then by *condemning*, and

* For that the contrary *Doctrine* is *Popish* and *Fanatical*, see Dr. Falkner in his *Christian Loyalty*, Book 2. Chap. 1. Sect. 2. Paragr. 9, 10, 11.

cenfuring,

censuring, and rejecting the Law it self, against which we had offended. SERM. V.

The Measures, by which a former unfortunate Prince lost his *Throne* and Kingdoms, at first were *Abdication*: Now they tell us 'twas * *Resistance*; and in time, I suppose, some Men may have the Confidence to call and own it by another Name—

Thus we find we are *unravell'd* by degrees, our Doctrines struck at, one after another; the *threads* of our Constitution *pick'd* out, one by one, and the Principles of our Government *unbing'd*. And if our kind Enemies go on a little farther, we may be quite *chang'd* in time, and become as they are (which is as *bad* as possible) before we are aware of it, or almost sensible of the several steps and degrees of our Alteration.

But by God's Grace and Mercy let us endeavour to preserve, with a just Zeal and Concern, what we have, and try to recover what is lost. Let us, in the *Words*, and according to the *Advice* of the Holy Ghost to the Church of *Sardis* upon a like occasion; According to the counsel of that *All* Rev. 3. 2, 3. seeing Spirit, that knows our works that we have a name that we live, and yet are dead; Let us be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die; for our works are not found perfect before God.

* The Speeches that go under the Names of the Bishops of Sarum and Oxford.

SERM. V. *God of his Infinite Mercy grant, That we may know those things that belong to our Peace, before they are for ever hid from our Eyes, for Jesus Christ his sake; to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be ascrib'd all Praise, Honour, Power, Might, Majesty, and Dominion, now and for evermore. Amen.*

The

The Law of Moses not of eternal Obligation, and the Reasons of our Saviour's Conformity to it, when he came to remove it.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
University on Circumcision-day,
January 1. 169³.

HEB. VIII. 8.

For finding fault with them, he saith, behold, the days come (saith the Lord) when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.

THOUGH God has never left the World without such Discoveries of his Nature and Will, as, when duly attended to, were sufficient to lead Men to the great and fundamental Duties of Religion; yet it must be acknowledg'd, that in all the former Revelations of himself, till

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Gal. 4. 4.

that by his Blessed Son, he was pleas'd to allow Mankind but a very short and imperfect View of his Glories, in comparison of what he gave them afterwards, when that *Fulness of Time was come*. He did in a great measure *before* reserve and conceal the *Beauties* of his Nature and *Holiness*; nor could Mankind by the help of those Notices they receiv'd from Heaven, arrive at so clear an Apprehension of the Deity, or inform themselves in a full Sense of their own Duty and Obligations to him. So that all the former Dispensations, as they were thus gradual, seem'd proportion'd rather to the Weakness and Infirmary of *Human Nature*, than any way equal to the Perfections of the *Divine*.

And if we would inquire after the Reason why God with-held himself for so many Ages from a more *familiar* Intercourse with Men, 'twas very probably this; because the World, so sinful and polluted as it then was, could not have born the nearer Approaches of the Deity; and by reason of that Darkness, which had spread it self over the Souls of Men, from the foul Corruption of *Human Nature*, Men were render'd utterly incapable, for the present, of entertaining any greater Light from Heaven than was afforded them; and consequently so very *glaring* a one, as a full Manifestation of God, at once, must have let in upon their Minds, would have been apt rather to have dazled and confounded their Understanding, than to have given them a more perfect Information. So that, barely in compliance with the Weakness of Man's Nature, Almighty God was fain

fain to suspend the full Influence of his SERM. VI.
Goodness for a while, and to restrain the
stronger Beams of Divine Light from break-
ing out upon the World, till Men were a-
ble to bear them better, and till, by gentle
and leisurely Steps, he had train'd them up
for more Glorious Revelations.

But then, as the Minds of Men began to
grow more generous and enlarg'd, to con-
ceive nobler Apprehensions of God's Na-
ture, and to aspire after a nearer Commu-
nion with him; so God himself, in his great
Goodness, was pleas'd to draw nearer like-
wise to Men; and, by *removing the Vail*, to
encourage and assist their weak Endeavours
to know and do his Will, by more liberal
and gracious Communications from himself.

This Method of God's proceeding with
Mankind in general, we have clearly exem-
plified to us in that one Instance of the Jew-
ish Nation, who were at first, we know, a
People of a *groveling* Apprehension, of *mean*
and *gross* Conceptions; and therefore God
was pleas'd so far to comply with that their
Weakness, for the present, as to give them a
Law suited and adapted to their own Tem-
per and *Genius*: A Law, which, beside the
Moral Part of it, common to it with the
Law of Nature, had nothing of real and na-
tural Excellency in it; consisting of Ritual
and Ceremonial Observances, made up of
Symbols and sensible Representations, that
were apt to strike upon the Senses, rather
than to improve the Mind, to please the
Fancies of Men, than to perfect their Na-
tures.

But

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But when, by a wise Intermixture of Providences, of Mercy and Severity, towards that People, God had wrought them off from that childish Fondness, and by the preaching of the *Prophets*, and their Comments on the Law of *Moses*, had brought them to more genuine and manly Notions of Religion, he then prepares himself in the next place to disclose to them the wonderful Change he was about to work in the Earth, the great Design he had in hand of giving a *new Law* to the World: A Law, which should be suited to all the Desires and Necessities of Men, and raise and advance their Nature to infinitely greater degrees and measures of Perfection, than what the *Law of Moses* could pretend to.

And this Design of his, God did, in the first and most early Ages of the Church, intimate to his People, by degrees, and more obscurely; but still as the great *Sun of Righteousness* drew nearer to his rising, God accordingly more freely open'd this *Counsel of his Will*, till at last he gave the World to understand his Meaning, in the most clear and lively manner. And no where more directly so, than in the Words of my Text, which are here cited by the *Apostle*, from the 31st chapter of the *Prophet Jeremy*; *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.* These Words are here introduc'd, and made use of by the Author of this Epistle, to convince the *Hebrew Converts*, who were all zealous of the Law, of the Necessity there was of the *Abrogation*

gation of that Law, upon the account of its Imperfection to all the Ends of true Righteousness, and Reconciliation with God. He tells them 'twas for that Reason, that God never design'd it should continue always; that he had all along intended to *dissolve* it, and to introduce a more pure and spiritual Religion in the room of it: And that therefore they had no Reason to be so much surpriz'd at this Change, as if some *strange thing* had happened, it being no more, than what their own *Prophets*, and the *Law* it self did foretel should come to pass. For so, says he, was it long since God's own Declaration by his Prophet *Jeremiah*, *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah.* In discoursing on these Words, I shall endeavour these two things;

First, To shew that the *Old Covenant*, or State of *Jewish Law*, neither was, nor could be intended by *Almighty God*, to stand to all Ages and Generations of the World.

Secondly, To consider the Reasons why our *Saviour Christ*, when he came to *abrogate* the *Ceremonial Law*, and to take off its Obligation, did *himself* notwithstanding conform to the Observance of it.

And *First* I am to shew, that the *old Covenant*, or *Jewish Law*, neither was, nor could ever be intended by *Almighty God*, the Author of it, to stand to all Ages and Generations of the World. To prove this Point in the most direct manner that was possible, and by such Arguments as were sure to be most prevailing with those, to whom he addressed

SERM. VI.  dressed himself, the *Author* of this *Epistle* produces several Passages from the Writings of the *old Testament*, to this purpose, as *what* he knew could never be deny'd by those with whom he disputed, who, being Converts to *Christianity*, from amongst the Jews, were therefore oblig'd to allow, and stand by the Authority of *Moses* and the *Prophets*. And here amongst the rest, there are two Texts of *old Scripture* which the *Apostle* particularly urges in pursuance of this Argument, and whereon he seems to lay the great Stress and Dependence of his reasoning. One of these Places he quotes in the twelfth Chapter of this *Epistle*, from the Prophecy of *Haggai*, where *God* is introduc'd by that *Prophet* speaking thus, *Yet once it is a little while, says God, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;* According to the *Apostle's* Sense of the Matter, (who, we may be sure, very well understood the Application of the *Text*) *God* hereby signified the great Change and Revolution of Affairs, that should shortly succeed in the *Jewish Church*; by these words, *I will shake the heavens and the earth*, denoting the Weakness and Instability of the present Constitution; and that, though it had its Authority from *Heaven* at first, and was deliver'd with the awful Appearances of Glory from thence, and with the more immediate Evidences of *God's* Power and Presence on *Mount Sinai*, yet being but imperfect in it self, and not founded on the natural Reason and Necessity of things, it was not so deeply and firmly laid, but that it might admit a Change

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Change for the better; *This word, yet once more*, says the Apostle, *signifying the removal of those things that were shaken, as of things that were made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.* SERM. VI.
Heb. 12. 27.

The other Proof of this matter which, I observ'd, the Apostle peculiarly insists on, is the Form, in which the Words of my Text it self are read, thus; *I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel and Judah: Now, says the Apostle, in that he saith A new Covenant, he hath made the first Old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.* Heb. 8. 13. The Force of which Reasoning, is founded on the strict and even Philosophical Notion of the Word (*Old*) which is, when by the long continuance of its Duration, any thing is become impair'd in its Strength and Beauty, and tends apace to Ruin and Dissolution.

Since then the Authority of Scripture appears so very full and express, for the *Discontinuance* of Moses's Law, I shall endeavour to prove the *Necessity* of its Abrogation, from the *Reason* and *Nature* of the thing it self: and that, notwithstanding what may be pretended for the Perpetuity of it, either, *first*, upon the account of its being of *Divine Appointment*; or, *secondly*, of those several Expressions in Scripture, that seem to import or favour its eternal Obligation.

For, First, As to its being of *Divine Institution*, what reason is there, merely upon this ground, that the Law must necessarily abide for ever? Because, in vertue of God's Authority stamp'd upon it, it oblig'd Men once, must

S E R M. VI. must it of necessity continue to do so always?

And cannot that Authority relax it self? Shall we deny *Almighty God* the Privilege of an ordinary *Legislator*, to reverse his own Acts? and must every Dispensation of his Will to Men be on one side commensurate with his own Eternity? We know 'tis the great Business of Wisdom to dispose and order things for the present Necessity, and, more particularly, the Effect of Divine Wisdom to accommodate the Laws it delivers, to the Capacities of Men, and to the several Exigencies of Times and Persons: But why must *God* needs bind up his own Hands, when he gives a Law to Men, or abridge himself of the liberty to recal the *Word* that is once gone out of his Mouth? He enacted a Body of Laws, 'tis true, for the *Jewish Nation*, and gave them such Statutes and Ordinances, as were of a level to the *Nonage* and Infirmary of that People, and by which *they were shut up to the Faith which should afterwards be reveal'd*. But when, in some time, they grew to a more confirm'd and manly Habit, and were able to digest Precepts of a stronger nature, *God* dealt with them then no longer as with *Children*, but expected a more substantial and genuine Obedience, such as was more suitable to his own Nature to receive, and more highly for their Benefit and Interest to return him. So that there is no Objection yet, but that *God* may dispense with his own Laws, if he pleases; and, where the Reason and Necessity of them ceases, he can, and usually does, remit the Obligation. And therefore the Law of *Moses*,

Gal. 3. 23.

ses, tho' God's own Act, yet was liable to be repeal'd by him, when in his own Wisdom he should see it most expedient.

Nor again, does it appear, in the *Second* place, that those Expressions in Scripture, that seem to favour the eternal Obligation of the *Law*, are in themselves of Force sufficient to conclude for it: As where it is said in *Exodus*, of the sprinkling of the *Passover*, *Exod. 12. 14.* that it should be an *Ordinance for ever*, and the like: Because these Words, as is usually answer'd in this case, must be sometimes understood in a more *confin'd* and *limited* Sense, and not always taken to signify an *endless* and *interminable* Duration. We are to abate so much of the Strictness and Fulness of their *literal* Expression, as the *Matter* and *Subject*, to which they are applied, do require. So that, when we read of some of the legal Ordinances, that they should *abide for ever*, or *to all Generations*, no more is meant, than that they should continue throughout, to the end of that Period to which *God* had before design'd they should, and 'till they had accomplish'd those Ends, to which he had appointed them.

And thus, having endeavour'd in some measure to remove those Suggestions, that might seem to prejudice the Argument upon which I am engag'd, it will be necessary for me to consider, in a more particular manner, the Reasons why in the nature of the thing it self, the *Mosaic* Law could not be intended to continue in force for ever, as that imports all Ages and Generations of Men to come. And the Reasons which I shall mention for this are *Three*.

First,

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First, Because the *Jewish* Religion was too narrow, and confin'd, as to the Extent of it.

Secondly, Because it left a great many Rules of Duties, and those of an highly excellent Nature, unexplain'd and imperfect.

And *Thirdly*, Because the Motives and Sanctions, that *Law* made use of, were not sufficient to oblige Men to Obedience.

And *First*, The *Jewish* Religion was too narrow, and confin'd, as to the Extent of it. It was not indeed intended to be the Religion of the World, of common and necessary Obligation to all Mankind: So far from this, that a great many of its Precepts were design'd on purpose only to distinguish and separate the *Jews* from other Nations, and were peculiarly contriv'd for the Interest and Humours of that People. And tho', 'tis true, God did not so set apart the *Jews* to himself, as utterly to *refuse* all other Persons Admittance to his Covenant; nay, and indeed seem'd to take it *kindly* of any one, that should come, and freely *join himself to the God of Israel*; yet, considering the mighty Prejudices other Nations were under, and how widely they differ'd from the *Jews*, both as to the Object and Manner of their Worship, it was not very likely *many* Persons should have come over to that Religion; there being especially no standing Order of Men appointed, whose Business it should be to preach and recommend that Religion to the other Parts of the World.

And then again, their being so strictly forbidden *Communion* with Men of other Nations, must needs have been a mighty Hindrance

drance to the Propagation of their Law; and *did* indeed almost confine up the Mysteries of *Judaism* within *Jerusalem* and the *Temple*.

But now, had God design'd this for the standing Religion of the World, for the full and ultimate Dispensation of his Mind and Will to Men; how much more suitable had it been to those Notions we conceive of the *Divine Goodness*, and more worthy that *general Kindness* he bears to his Creatures, for him to have proclaim'd this Law to the main Bulk and Body of Mankind, than to have thus stifi'd it in one *single Corner* of the Earth! For *every Law* being in its nature design'd for publick Benefit, the more *extensive* it is, and the nearer it comes to be *universal*, so much indeed is it the more excellent in it self. Whereas the *Jews*, whom the Law of *Moses* respected only, were but a very small and inconsiderable Parcel of Men, in comparison, not only of the whole World, but of some particular Nations of it; the *Egyptians* and *Assyrians* vastly exceeded them in Multitudes; and God himself professes, that he did not make choice of them above other Nations, in regard of their great Strength or Numbers; for *they were the fewest*, he tells *Dent. 7. 7.* them, *of all People*.

Was God then unconcern'd what became of the rest of Mankind, or was he not sufficient to provide for all? Were the Bowels of the *Father of Mercies* ever stinted? Can he be sway'd by any blind Respect of Persons, or acted by false Measures of Affection? Why then did he so highly favour one sin-

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Rom. 3. 29.

gle People, and that probably none of the best
 neither, when all the other Kingdoms of
 the Earth seem'd to lye despis'd and disre-
 garded by him? Is he the God of the Jews
 only, or he not of the Gentiles also? Yes, and
 of the Gentiles also: Both of them are equal-
 ly his Creatures, the Work of his Hands,
 and therefore equally the Charge and Con-
 cern of his good Providence; and consequent-
 ly had been both equally favour'd with that
 first Revelation of his Will, had that been
 the only Kindness he intended the World.
 But *that Law* being only design'd for a tem-
 porary Institution, and suited to a present
 Conscience, it was very reconcileable
 with God's Goodness, and congruous to his
 Wisdom, to determine it to such a particular
 Portion of the World as he pleas'd: And,
 since he had better things in store for Jews
 and Gentiles both, it was a matter of greater
 indifference to him, to whom he should com-
 mit those first, and more imperfect Oracles
 of his Will: And his very denying his Law
 to the Gentiles was an Evidence he did not
 design it should continue for ever to the
 Jews.

If it should be here said, that tho' God
 might indeed at first confine his Revelations
 to the Jews, yet, afterwards, when Mankind
 should be drawn to observe the strange In-
 fluence *that Religion* had upon the Prospe-
 rity of that People, and so entertain a kinder
 Disposition towards it; that *then* probably
 God might have thought fit to have enlarg'd
 the Borders of the Jewish Church to all the
 World; and so *Moses* should have become the
 great

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great Prophet of the Nations, and Mount Zion the Joy of the whole Earth: To this it may be answer'd, that there were some particular Constitutions in that Religion, and those not the least insisted on, which, in the nature of the thing it self, were utterly inconsistent with this Enlargement of that Church. As for instance, that Command of God, that all the Males should appear three times a year before him in Jerusalem: But now, could all the World pay Attendance at the Temple? or was Jerusalem sufficient to receive all Nations?

Exod. 23. 17.

And then, the Priesthood being confin'd to a single Family in Israel, the greatest part of the World must have been left destitute of due Means of Instruction: For was Levi equal to all Mankind? or could the Loyns of Aaron supply a Ministry for the World? We see then, that God did not, nor could design the Religion of the Jews to be universal, and consequently not perpetual; for then he had shut the greatest part of the World for ever out of Covenant with him.

Secondly, the Law of Moses could not be of perpetual Obligation, because it left a great many Rules of Duties, and those of a highly excellent Nature, unexplain'd and imperfect. It is certain, that when God came down upon Mount Sinai, he did not propose to give a Law every way equal to the Capacities of Human Nature, nor to deliver a full and compleat System of all the Duties that concern Mankind; but he had respect to that particular Nation of the Jews, and what

Nehem. 9. 13.

SERM. VI. would best comport with the Infirmities of that People. So that the *Jewish* Religion seems to have been rather a *political* one, suited to the Reasons of that State and Nation. For besides that for the most part the Duties recommended by the Law are of a *positive* and *ritual* Nature, and such as concern the outward Service of the Body, more than the Perfection of the Mind; even the *Decalogue* it self, which at first one would take to be a *Breviate* of the *Moral Law*, and therefore hope to find there all the Heads of Duties of that kind, is yet, in this particular respect; very incompleat and defective. For the Duties towards a Man's self, which yet are founded upon as deep Reason as any other, and of a great Influence too upon the Happiness of Mankind, are yet neither expressly mention'd there, nor are they, by easie and immediate Consequence, deducible thence. And where-ever else they are taken notice of throughout the Body of the *Law*, it is so very slightly and coldly, as if it had been besides the Design of *Moses* to stand to consider Matters of that nature.

But then, as for the *higher*, more *refin'd*, and *spiritual* Duties of the *Christian* Institution, such as *Purity* of Heart, *Contempt* of the World, and the like, the *Jews*, most of them, seem'd to have had very faint and imperfect, and some of them very paeverse Notions of these things. We are sure it was grown to be so very bad in our *Saviour's* Days, that those false Guides of the People, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, had taken off the
Necessity

Necessity of all inward Purity, and * did not SERM. VI.
scruple to tell Men, that if they kept them-
selves only from the outward and grosser
Acts of Sin, they need do no more, but had
answer'd the full Intention of the Law.

Now though this be really no Prejudice
to the Perfection of that Religion, that these
ill Men did so grossly *misinterpret* the Design
of it, yet considering their own *ill* Hearts
and Inclinations, 'tis possible they might take
the first occasion of these Errors, by obser-
ving, how imperfectly, and unequally, the *Law*
inforc'd those greater Duties, in comparison
of the *ritual* Parts of that Religion, Mat-
ters in themselves of far less Moment and
Consequence. So that when our *Saviour* en-
ter'd upon his *Prophetick* Office, he found it
necessary to carry the Duty of Man much
higher than it was; and though, in doing
this, he was pleas'd, for the most part, to
take his Hints from *Moses*, and made the
Law his Foundation to proceed upon; yet
he rais'd the Superstructure to a far nobler
Pitch than had ever been known in the World
before; by explaining the Precepts of the
Moral Law into a more refin'd and excellent
Sense, and laying open the full Obligation
of them upon the Consciences of Men: And
by those great Improvements he made to the
Law of *Moses*, in his admirable *Sermon* on
the *Mount*, he sufficiently shew'd how much
it needed them.

* Grot. de Jure Belli & Pacis, Lib. 1. c. 2. sect. 6. part 4.

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And how then could such an insufficient and defective Institution, as this of *Moses* was, be design'd for an everlasting Continuance, to have been the standing and eternal Rule of Human Nature! From the very End and Reason, why *God* should give a Law at all to Mankind, 'tis not difficult to prove, that *that* Law, whichsoever it should be, that *God* could intend for the perpetual and only one to Men, must have been infinitely more perfect than that of *Moses* was. For why does *God* abridge the Liberty of Men, why does he lay his Commands and Restraints upon them, at any time, but that he may guide them by this means to the Perfection and Happiness of their Natures? Though some indeed of the *Divine* Laws are more fully and directly contriv'd to this End than others, yet all of them do in some measure tend to it. But then, that Law, which *God* would design to be the only Rule of Human Life, and to last for ever, must of necessity have been in its nature suited and adapted to promote this great end of Man's Perfection and Happiness, as much as *God* intends and wills it; for otherwise, if there should have been no other Law given, and yet that which was to be the only and perpetual one should have been insufficient to Man's Happiness, *God* might then have seem'd to have left Mankind destitute of a sufficient Direction to his main and ultimate End, which yet is highly contrary to his *Wisdom* and *Goodness* to suppose he should do. But now *God* desires and intends that Man should be as happy as he can be, as far as the Capacities

ties of his Nature will admit; and therefore his only and eternal Law must have been as perfect as was possible: Which because the Jewish Law was not, as I have endeavoured to prove, it could not therefore be the only and final Revelation of God to the World, and for that reason not perpetual.

Thirdly, The Motives and Sanctions, which that Law made use of, were not sufficient to oblige Men to Obedience. * That the old Legal Covenant proceeded upon Temporal Rewards and Punishments only, as to the express and open Tenor of it, is very plain and clear from that Distinction the Apostle to the Hebrews puts between that former, and this new Evangelical Covenant, where he tells us, that Christ was made the Mediator of a better Covenant, establish'd upon better Promises. Heb. 8. 6. But now if one main ground of Difference between those two Covenants lay in the Nature of these Promises, each was founded on, and it be certain, that the Gospel Covenant stands upon the Spiritual Promises of Life and Glory, then 'tis as certain, on the other side, that the old

* I don't say that the Fathers of the Old Testament acted with regard only to Temporal Sanctions, for that were to oppose the Doctrine of one of our Church's Articles, which I believe; but I do, and may safely affirm, that all that the Law it self proposes, is Temporal; and that what good Men acted upon higher Views than of this Life, they did from Tradition, or upon reasonable Presumptions, or some after Revelation, no where plainly discoverable in the Books of Moses. For which I have the Authority of Grotius, Dr. Hammond, and Mr. Mede.

SERMON VI. *Jewish* Covenant did not so; for if it had, how then could the *Apostle*, in reason, have made the different Nature of the Promises, a ground of Distinction between the *Covenants*? And if *both* were establish'd upon the same, how then was one upon † better Promises than the other? 'Tis true indeed, there were some *Mystical* Overtures, some obscure Presumptions of the Rewards of another Life, under the *Old Covenant*, and we know that Men of a forward Piety were influenc'd by them: But after all, this was still over and above to any thing in the *Sanctions* of *Moses*, and more than any Man could then put in his Claim to, in vertue of his Obedience to that Law.

And because the Arguments for Obedience to the Law were drawn only from the Proposals of this Life, that was the Reason they prov'd so very weak and ineffectual: For these Temporal Goods and Evils are by no means the proper holds upon Human Nature; nor have they weight enough upon the Wills of Men to bend them to their Duty, where there is any considerable Difficulty or Advantage to counterpoise. For to render any Law powerful and effective, there must be a considerable Advantage on the side of what it proposes, compar'd with what it obliges a Man to forbear or undergo in compliance with it. And as far as any Law fails in this respect, so much the more does

† For it plainly appears from the *Apostle's* Argument in the Place cited, that the Word better must respect the Nature, and Substance, and not any mere Circumstances of the Promises themselves.

it lose, or abate of its due Force upon the SERM. VI.
 Mind of Man. So that when the Law of *Moses* enjoyn'd Men hard and spiritual Duties, upon the prospect of Worldly Interests only, and denounc'd only Temporal Inconveniences upon the *Neglect* of those Duties, it fail'd in one of the main Essentials of a Law, and for that Reason could not prevail to any great purpose upon Mens Minds. For 'tis impossible the Streams should run higher than the Fountain, or that Mens Obedience should rise above the Motives for it. To give one plain *Instance*, for the better illustration of this matter: The inordinate Love of the World was doubtless a Sin under the old Law, as well as under the Gospel; because it was inconsistent with the *Love of God*, which yet certainly the *Jews*, as well as *Christians*, were oblig'd to; it being one of the main Hinges upon which, our *Saviour* tells them and us, all the Law and the *Prophets* hang. Mat. 22. 40. Now what Method would *Moses* make use of, to take Men off from this Vice, the irregular Love of this World? Why, by proposing a greater Temporal Interest, that if Men would love God more, and the World less, he would then bless them in their *Basket* and *their Store*, in the *Fruit of their Bodies*, and of *their Fields*. Deut. 28. 5. But now, that this could not be a very proper Argument to this purpose, will appear, if we consider, that all the force, this Argument could have upon them, must suppose however a *less degree* of the love of this World as necessary in order to it: For if they could be supposed not to love the World

SERMON VI. *World at all, how then could the Proposal of Temporal Advantages affect their Minds, or be any Motive to their Obedience? but now, to go about thus to perswade Men off from the intemperate Love of any thing, which is only a greater Love than it should be, by an Argument, that does suppose and require a lesser Love of the same thing, is a little incongruous to Nature, and what Almighty God would never have done, but in condescension to the dulness and heaviness of that People, who were hardly capable of any other, and therefore must have been wrought upon by such kind of Arguments as could any way touch them.*

But now, had God intended this first and imperfect Law of *Moses* to have stood for ever, and to be of eternal Obligation, it might then have seem'd some Reflection upon his Wisdom, and his Goodness both, that he should not have taken care to guard it with stronger Sanctions. It is possible indeed that God may give some Laws to Men, and yet not enforce them so powerfully as might be done; but then these are only such, as are of less Consequence to Man's Happiness, and which God, it may be, intends to fill up and supply by some after Dispensation: But when he gives a Law to the World once for all, since Sanctions are in the nature of Means to Ends to the Observance of a Law, we may be sure God would provide for such a Law as this, proportionably as he intends it shall be kept; and God certainly does design his only and eternal Law to Men should be observ'd; other-

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otherwise, why did he give it at all? And SERM. VI.
consequently had the Law of Moses been the
last Revelation the World was ever to have
expected, God would have taken sufficient
Security of Mankind for the Observance of
it: Which yet we see he did not, but on
the contrary, finding fault himself with that
first Institution * (and not as our Translation
reads it, with them, that is the Jews,) he
saith, *Behold the days come (saith the Lord,) when I will make a new Covenant with the house of Israel, and the house of Judah: not according to the Covenant, that I made with their Fathers, in the day, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the Land of Egypt: because they continued not in my Covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.* Where we see, 'tis the Insufficiency of that first Covenant to engage Men to Obedience, that is made the Reason why God resolv'd upon the abolishing it.

I come now to the *Second* thing proposed, to consider the Reasons, why our *Saviour Christ*, when he came to abrogate the Ceremonial Law, and to take off its Obligation, did himself notwithstanding think fit to conform to the Observance of it. There are some indeed, that seem to be over-scrupulous and tender, how they pronounce our *Lord* to have abrogated any Law of Divine Institution that he found in the World when he came, and that because of his own Words, where he tells us, that

* See Dr. Hammond on the Place.

SER. M. VI. *he came not to destroy the Law, and the Prophets,*
but to fulfil them. Now tho' these Expressions of his (*that he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets*) might be intended only of the Moral Duties of Religion, (as they are certainly in another Place, where the *Law* and the *Prophets* are made reducible to the two great Heads of Religion, the *love of God and of our Neighbour*) and we are sure, that our Saviour did not in any Sense intend to destroy these things from amongst Men, but, on the quite contrary, very much confirm'd and settled them, by discovering the Nature of them more fully, and strengthening their Obligation: Tho', I say, this might here be a sufficient Answer to take off the force of this Objection, yet this is not all; for, if we consider the matter a little more attentively, we shall find, that *Christ* may be said to have *abrogated* the *Ceremonial Law*, and, notwithstanding that, these Words of his (*that he did not come to destroy but to fulfil the Law and the Prophets*), may hold true even of the *Ceremonial Law* it self. For *Christ*, 'tis certain, did not *destroy* even the *Law of Ordinances* in one Sense; that is, he did not make it null and void as to the original Design and Intention of it, which was to prefigure himself; all the Types and Shadows of that Religion, having had their full Completion by him, and meeting in him, as the true *Body and Substance* from whom, and for whom, they were at first projected. But then as to the outward Use and Observation of that *Typical Law*, this every one must own he did remove

Mat. 5. 17.

move or abolish, and no more than this is SERM. VI.
 here intended, when we say he *abrogated*
 that *Law*.

And that he did so much as this, is very clear from the design of his own Words to the Woman of Samaria. *Woman, believe me, John 4. 21, 22, the hour is coming when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father: but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and Truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* By these Words of his, he plainly signifies, that he would shortly set Men free from the Use and Observance of the Ceremonial Worship, and take away all Distinction between *Jews* and *Gentiles*, upon that account. And though it must be granted, he did not this by any direct and express Repeal of that Law, yet by setting up a more pure and spiritual Religion in the World, and so evacuating the old One, he did it by consequence, as effectually, and to as full Satisfaction of rational Minds about it, as if he should have revoked that Law upon Mount Sinai, in as loud Thunder as he gave it.

Now though we are sure he came into the World upon a design of abolishing the Law, yet there may be these three Reasons given, why he should think fit himself to comply to the Observance of it.

First, Because that Law was to continue yet in force some time after his coming in to the World.

Secondly, That by this Means, his own Compliance, he might have an easier Access

SERMON VI. to the Jews, and fairer Opportunities of gaining upon them, by his Doctrine and Example.

And *Thirdly*, That he might hereby give a perfect Instance of Obedience to his Father, in every thing.

And, *First*, Because the ritual Law was to continue in force as long as our Saviour should be upon Earth, therefore it was requisite, he should have submitted to it, as being himself born, and living under its OEconomy. For though he came into the World a Mediator of that *new Covenant*, by which indeed the *old One* was afterwards superseded, yet it must be consider'd, that this *new Covenant* of his was not to have its full Effect, to this purpose, till after his Death and Crucifixion. For *a Testament is of force, says the Apostle, after men are dead, otherwise it is of no strength at all whilst the Testator liveth.* It must here be still granted, that as to the inward salutary Effects of this *new Covenant*, upon the Souls and Spirits of Men, so far it took place immediately upon the Fall, and by Vertue of it, the Fathers of the *old Testament* obtain'd Favour in the sight of God; *Christ* being even then in some Sense crucified and slain, that is internally, in the Design and Intention of God the Father, and in his own Purpose and Election; for he was the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, and, consequently, before ever the Vertue of his Sufferings was applied to Men. And so this does not any way contradict the Assertion of the *Apostle*, when he maintains the Necessity of the *Testator's*

Heb. 9. 17.

Rev. 13. 8.

Sator's Death, in order to the enforcing the **SER. VI.**
Testament. For, as *Christ's Death* was, be-
 fore his coming into the World, only *intentional*, so were the Effects of it, till then,
 only Inward and Spiritual. But then, as for
 any outward and publick Effects of this new
Testament, such as the changing the *Eccle-*
siastical Polity of a Nation, as of the *Jews*,
 or annulling any divine Law, that was al-
 ready in the World, such Effects as these it
 was not to have, till after it was actually
 confirm'd and sealed by the *Blood of Christ*.
 for it was then, and not before, that *Christ* Col. 2. 14.
blotted out the hand-writing of Ordinances that
was against us, nailing it to his cross.

So that, our *Blessed Saviour*, being born
 under the Condition of Men, and within
 the obliging Power of the Law, it was ne-
 cessary he should testify his Submission and
 Obedience to it. For it being the Institu-
 tion of *God his Father*, till he had signified
 his Pleasure to the contrary, even his own
 eternal Son was not not to be exempted
 from its Obligation. For *God sent forth his* Gal. 4. 4.
Son made of a Woman made under the Law.
 He was born indeed in the Subjection, and
 to the Obedience of human Nature, be-
 side that he learnt it, as the *Apostle* tells us,
 by what he suffer'd. When the days were ful- Heb. 5. 8.
 fill'd, we are told, his parents brought him to Luke 2. 27.
Jerusalem to do for him according to the Law.
 And when being yet a little Child he had
 taken upon him the *Mosaic Covenant*, by
 his Circumcision, as he grew up he did
 perfectly conform his Life and Practice to it.
 Nor, when he went abroad into the World,
 upon

SERM. VI. upon his Office, did he ever do any thing to countenance the Breach and Violation of that Law; but rather took all Occasions to commend, and encourage Obedience to it; charging his own Disciples and Followers to observe, and *do what they who sat in Moses seat*, and acted by his Authority, should command them; and strictly enjoyning the *Leper* whom he had cleans'd, as if it had been the Condition of his Recovery, to go and shew himself to the Priest, and to offer those things that Moses commanded for a Testimony. And when the Malice and Envy of the Jews often objected against him as an Enemy to Moses, and reproach'd him as a Transgressor of the Law, he as often sufficiently vindicates himself from their Charge, by proving even out of the Law it self, that what he did was in such charitable Instances, as in Reason and Equity that Law it self could not be intended to prohibit.

Mat. 23. 2, 3.

Mat. 8. 4.

Again, *Secondly*, Christ submitted himself to a Conformity to the Law, that by this Means he might have an easier Access to the Jews, and fairer Opportunities of gaining upon them, by his Doctrine and Example. For should he have done otherwise, this had been such a Prejudice against his Person, as would infallibly have block'd up all the ways of Instruction, and have render'd his most importunate Advice to that People utterly vain and ineffectual. We know how they were offended at the Lowness of his Original, as they thought it, and stumbled at the Meanness of his Appearance, as it was; but how, think we, would they have scorn'd and flour-ed,

ed, and with what an Indignation would they have rose against him, had he come without the great Seal of the Covenant upon him, his *Circumcision*! Would they have ever suffer'd, that one, that was *an alien from the commonwealth of Israel*, should set up for an Instructor of Righteousness, and take upon him to teach others, who *had the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law?* Or would they indeed have ever endur'd his Company to that end? For besides that they presum'd themselves forbidden a familiar Converse with Men without the Covenant by the Word of God himself, they were naturally a People of a proud and contemptuous Spirit, forward enough to make Distances, where they should not be; and therefore we may be sure, against a Man, with whom they had a Quarrel upon other Accounts, as they had with our blessed Saviour, they would have been very ready to have made use of the Privilege of separating themselves from him, if they could have found any Pretence from their Law for doing so. Especially considering how ungrateful the Company of so excellent a Person must have been to Men of such ill Designs and Tempers as they were, whose Vices *therefore*, both by his admirable Example, and divine Discourses, he must have continually reproach'd and upbraided. But now, when they saw he was a Man like themselves, a *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, and *of the family and stock of Abraham*, this did in some measure reconcile them to his Doctrine, and considerably abate that Aversion they would have otherwise had against his

N Person:

SERM. VI.



John 18. 20.

Person: For being of the same Church and Profession with themselves, they could not but look upon him, at first, to have the same Interests too, unless he should some way or other discover himself to the contrary. And then by being a *Jew*, he was likewise privileg'd to frequent their *Synagogues* and *Temple*, their Places of religious Resort and Concourse, *where the Jews always come*, and so had the Liberty of speaking openly to the World, and, by kind and powerful Insinuations, and an obliging and amiable Behaviour, had the Opportunities of gaining upon the Hearts and Affections of Men, and of bringing over Proselytes and Disciples to his Doctrine. And these Advantages he could not have expected, had he been any otherwise than an *Israelite* himself.

Thirdly and Lastly, It was requisite our *Blessed Lord* should Conform himself to the *ceremonial Law*, that he might hereby give a perfect Instance of Obedience to his Father, in every thing. For Obedience to the *positive* Precepts of Religion, though it be in Matters of an inferior and indifferent nature in themselves, is yet of a very high Value and Acceptance in the sight of *God*, of almost as great, sometimes, as our Compliance with a moral Duty; nay and perhaps in some Cases of *greater* too; because the Arguments, by which a Man is brought under this sort of Obedience, may have a more near and immediate Respect to *God* himself, than many others. For a Man may be prevail'd upon to observe a natural Duty, suppose upon prudential Reasons, because it may
be

be for his Interest or his Health to do so; but he, that resigns himself up to a merely *positive* Precept, a thing no otherwise Good than as commanded, does by this shew, that he rests himself only upon the Divine Authority, and most fully own the Obligation it has upon him.

And from hence, it could not be, but that *God Almighty* must have highly approv'd the Obedience of our *Saviour* to him in this kind of Duties. And accordingly, we may observe, that it was, *once* when he was fulfilling this sort of *Righteousness*, at his Baptism in the River *Jordan*; 'twas then that *God the Father*, in Testimony of his high Satisfaction in him, pronounc'd that Voice from Heaven upon him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleas'd.* Mat. 3. 15, 17.

And besides what I have said, that *God* might require our *Saviour's* Subjection to him in these Things, as an Evidence of his entire Obedience, there is nothing wherein the admirable *Congruity* of *divine Wisdom* appears, more than in this; in that our Blessed *Saviour*, by his perfect Conformity to the positive Duties of Religion, has thereby restor'd human Nature in the same Instance, in which it fell; That as Man's Transgression began in the Violation of a *positive Law*, so the Righteousness of *Christ* should be made perfect, in a compleat and exact Obedience to *Laws* of the same Nature; that so where-
in *sin* first enter'd into the world, therein righte-
ousness might much more abound, to the Praise and Glory of *God the Father* by *Jesus Christ* our Lord. Rom. 5. 20.

To whom, &c.

N 2

The

*The utter Inconsistence, and no Necessity,
of observing the Law of Moses to-
gether with the Profession of Chri-
stianity.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the
University of OXFORD,
January 1. 17th.

PHILIP III. 2, 3.

*Beware of the Concision; For
we are the Circumcision.*

THERE is nothing, about which
the great *Apostle* of the *Gentiles* ap-
pears more concern'd to make
good and assert his Character, than
by his Endeavours to defend and secure those,
that were so immediately his Charge, in the
full Possession of their Rights of *Christianity*,
and to confirm them in that Liberty with
Gal. 5. 1. which *Christ* had made them free; he does
this more especially, in Opposition to the
unreasonable

unreasonable Claims, and unnecessary Encroachments of the Law of *Moses*, and its Professors, of whom there were many in those early Times, whether out of a sincere, though erroneous Conviction of their Judgment, or to serve some present plausible temporary Designs, as the *Apostle* rather insinuates, who appear'd such strong Zealots, and high Vouchers for the standing Necessity of that Law, as that, in their Opinion, Christianity it self, without the joynt Observance of the Law of Ceremonies, could signifie nothing, to the real Benefit and Spiritual Interests of Men's Souls; though the *Apostle* at the same time was convinc'd, upon the best Reason in the World, that it could really have done no good, in Conjunction with it.

For which Reason 'tis, that though he was an *Hebrew* himself, furnish'd with all the Advantages which that Law could give him, and had as high Pretensions to any Privileges from it, as any Man living, both upon the account of his Birth and Education under it, and within all the Conditions that Law requir'd, besides his own exact Conformity to all its Rules in one of the *straitest sects of that Religion*, yet we find he voluntarily renounces and disclaims all these apparent Advantages of his own, and quite divests himself of all his *legal* Perfections, for the Benefit of his *Christian Disciples*; to prevent their being drawn aside, and inveigled by those fair shews in the Flesh, as he styles it, lest they should be any way prevail'd upon, to the great Prejudice of *Christianity*, to en-

SER. M. VII. certain too high a Concept of that Carnal
 ~~~~~ Righteousness, which he himself therefore ap-  
 Phil. 3. 4, 5, 6, pears so plainly to reject. I might have con-  
 7, 8. fidence, says he, in the flesh; If any other man  
 thinketh that he hath whereof he may trust in  
 the flesh, I more, circumcis'd the eighth day, of  
 the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin,  
 an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the  
 law a Pharisee, concerning zeal, persecuting  
 the Church, touching the righteousness which  
 is in the law blameless, but what things were  
 gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ, Yea  
 doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for  
 the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus  
 my Lord. He himself, who was it seems so  
 thoroughly and so intimately acquainted with  
 the whole Tenor of the Mosaic Institution,  
 so perfectly skill'd in its whole Design, and  
 that saw, so clearly, through its utmost  
 Weight and Importance, yet he could set no  
 value on it; in Comparison with the infinite  
 Treasures and Advantages of the Christian  
 Faith and Doctrine, he rejects it all. And  
 this he does, so professedly, in order to beat  
 down other Mens vain and false Opinions  
 about the Law, because he knew, that if an  
 Error of this Nature once prevail'd, it must  
 prove one of the greatest Hindrances to the  
 Progress, and in a great Measure disappoint  
 the blessed effects of Christianity. For other  
 Mens Good therefore, and in Comparison of  
 the Christian Religion, he does not stick to  
 speak of the Legal Ordinances, in Terms of  
 Diminution and Disparagement. The whole  
 Mosaic Dispensation, in another place, he  
 styles a State of Bondage; and Circumcision, that  
 boasted



boasted Seal of the Covenant, he reproaches in my Text, with the lessening title of *Circumcision*, and puts in a guard and caution upon his Disciples against it. *Beware of the Circumcision; For we are the Circumcision.*

The whole of my Design upon these Words, and with regard to the *Religious Solemnity* of this Day, will be taken up in stating these *Two Points*.

*First*, Wherein it was, that the so very great Inconvenience, or Danger of admitting, and joyning the *Jewish Legal Observances* with the Profession of *Christianity* lay, and what was the true Ground and Reason of the Apostle's Caution in my Text, *Beware of the Circumcision.*

*Secondly*, That there could not be urg'd any real Pretence of Necessity for such an odd Conjunction of the *Law* and *Christianity*, because the utmost Design and End of the *Mosaic Rites* was more than fully answer'd, by the Perfection and Purity of the *Gospel Dispensation*: *For we are the Circumcision.*

*First*, I shall endeavour to determine wherein it was, that the so very great Inconvenience, or Danger of admitting, and joyning the *Jewish Legal Observances* with the Profession of *Christianity*, lay, and what was the true Ground and Reason of the Apostle's Caution in my Text, *Beware of the Circumcision.* 'Tis certain that St. Paul expresses himself in as high Terms, and stands up as vigorously against a Practice of this nature, both in this, and other of his Epistles, as upon any one Point whatever; and seems hardly ever to raise himself more, than in his Controversie with those *False Teachers*, who

## A SERMON Preach'd

SERM. VII. would have super-induc'd *Judaism* upon *Christianity*. More especially in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, wherein he represents himself as jealous of that People's falling off to the Observance of the *Mosaical Rites*, and as much afraid of the Consequences, as if their utmost Safety, and the very Life of *Christianity* had been struck at. Nay, he does expressly warn them to this purpose, more than once, in a very earnest and pathetic manner, that, upon such their compliance with the Law, which they neither had, nor ought to have any Concernment with, he apprehended the certain Ruin of their Faith, the utter Voidance and Forfeiture of all their *Christian Privileges*. *Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. And again, Christ is become of none effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the Law, ye are fallen from Grace.*

Gal. 5. 2, 4.

And can we suppose that the Spirit of God in the *Apostle* should thus rise up, and protest against a Dispensation, that deriv'd its original Authority from himself, from Heaven; that he should appear so zealously concern'd to cancel what he had before establish'd, if it had not been most highly prejudicial to, or rather quite inconsistent with, his latter more perfect Revelation of the *Gospel*? And yet, upon the first View, it does not appear what was the Reason of this great Exception against the Constitution of *Moses*, nor why it might not very well have continued in consistence with the Religion of our *Saviour*; which yet we are sure it could not, and for what Reasons I shall make it more immediately my Business to enquire. *First*

First then, the great and fundamental Principle of Christianity, that of our *Justification by Faith*, which is the very Corner Stone in the whole Fabrick of our Religion, and without which it would lose its very Name and Distinction, could never have prevail'd, while Men had been under a Conviction of the necessity of a *Legal Obedience*: *As many of you as are justified by the Law are fallen from Grace.* And yet we know that their Justification by the Law was the main end and drift of Mens Obedience to it, and the general Opinion that prevail'd in those days, was, that no less than a perfect Conformity to the Law, or one very near it, could ever procure Men an Acceptance at the Hands of God. The Letter of the Law it self is peremptory and rigorous in this Sense, *he that does these things shall live in them*, and he only; and again, on the threatening Hand, *cursed is every one that continues not in all things that are written in this Book of the Law to do them.* These, we see then, were the severe Demands and Proposals in the Law it self, upon which Mens Expectation of being justified must have at that time depended. But to this it may be here objected, Did not the Law of *Moses* it self admit of Expiations in case of smaller Faults? Were not *Sin Offerings* and *Trespass Offerings* prescribed even by the direction of God himself, at the hand of *Moses*? And were not Relaxations granted in several Cases from the extremity of Justice? And how then could that People ever conceive, or entertain Thoughts of  
being



SERM. VII. being justified by a perfect Obedience, when the Law it self supposes such frequent Lapses and Transgressions would happen by Men, and therefore takes care, we see, beforehand, for a proper Remedy? To this perhaps the Answer is not so very difficult as it may at first appear: For Men might still retain Hopes of being justified by the Law of *Moses*, though they could not perfectly obey, and broke it in many Instances, as long as they fondly imagin'd, that their performance of the Expiation, in case of Delinquency, was an Equivalent with God for their first Obedience. And according to this Sense they might mistake the Law as if it were *disjunctive*, after this manner, either Obey, or offer the Sacrifice appointed in case of Error. And 'tis certain that the *Jews* had these Dependencies, and that most of the *Votaries* of that Religion thought the Stain of their Guilt quite clear'd off by the *Blood* of those *Sacrifices*, which they offer'd by the Law, tho' we learn from a more perfect Revelation since, that 'twas impossible it should be so.

'Tis plain then, that the Reason of that high Conceit Men had fram'd, and endeavour'd to maintain, of the *Mosaic* Ordinances, was, for that they vainly presum'd to be *justified* by that their Obedience, and because they did so, were ready to reject whatever Proposals should offer Salvation upon other Terms, as we know they did the *Gospel* of *Christ* himself upon this very occasion. 'Tis the *Apostle's* own Conclusion of his Argument, in his Epistle to the

*Romans,*

*Romans*, What shall we say then? that is, as the Result and Consequence of his former Reasonings, why this says he, by way of Answer to himself, That the Gentiles which follow'd not after Righteousness, that is of the Law, have attain'd to Righteousness, even the Righteousness which is of Faith: But Israel which follow'd after the Law of Righteousness, hath not attain'd to the Law of Righteousness; wherefore? because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the works of the Law; for they stumbled at that stumbling Stone: Here was the original Cause of the fatal Lapse of that People, and of their Non-compliance with Christianity, that they would not let go their own imaginary Holiness, nor renounce their Merits of conforming to the Law, upon any Terms that could be offer'd them, tho' of never so great advantage to their Happiness: They thought it no less than a Reproach, and unreasonable to the utmost degree, for them to quit those high Privileges of their Religion, by which they were at present distinguish'd from the rest of the World, and to put themselves only upon a level with the Heathen Nations; which yet we know they must have done, had they once come into the Scheme of Justification by Faith in the Merits of a Redeemer: But this their high Stomach would by no means submit to, and, so far, their Pride, as it uses to prove in other Cases, was the great Occasion of their Fall.

But now, if Justification by Works was the design and aim of their Legal Obedience, as it plainly appears by these so frequent

SERM. VII.

Rom. 9. 30,

31. 32.

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Rom. 11. 6.

Rom. 4. 4.

Rom. 4. 5.

quent declarations of *Scripture* to have been, then 'tis certain, there was no room for the *Gospel* to stand in consort with it; for these two Forms of Religion were directly cross and opposite to each other in the very first Principles of their Constitution, and must have been ever thwarting and juggling one another in that which was their main and principal Design. For, by the *Apostle's* Argument, *If the reward be of Grace*, and so it must be, if 'tis by Justification of Faith, then is it no more of Works, otherwise Grace is no more Grace. But if it be of Works, then is it no more Grace, otherwise Work is no more Work. For to him that worketh is the Reward not reckon'd of Grace, but of Debt; and that was the Presumption of the *Jew* for his Legal Obedience: how it reasonably could be so, I shall not here inquire, but that it was generally so is certain. But now as to the Christian Justification, to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his Faith is counted for Righteousness. Can there be any thing more opposite than these Accounts which a *Jew* and a *Christian* would each severally give of his expectance of Justification? And is it then possible a Man should maintain such an high Opinion of the benefits of the *Law*, and at the same time do right to *Christianity* in that great Point of all, which so far distinguishes it from the *Law*? The very reason of Obedience to the *Law*, was an Opinion of Righteousness to be had from thence; which Opinion, we see, is directly contradicted by the *Gospel*, for which reason



son these two are inconsistent: And consequently if *Legal Obedience* be super-induc'd upon *Christianity*, it must choke and destroy it in its nearest and most Vital Principle; which was the first Reason for the *Apostle's* Caution in my Text, *beware of the Concision*, for he that once submitted to *Circumcision*, which was the principal Rite of *Judaism*, out of an Opinion of its Necessity, was upon the same ground oblig'd to conform himself to the whole Law, and then St. Paul will quickly satisfy us what must become of *Christianity*. Behold I Paul say unto you, Gal. 5. 2, 3, that if you be circumcis'd, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every Man that is circumcis'd, that he is a Debter to do the whole Law. The Consequence of which Doctrine the same *Apostle* will tell us in another Place, that if *Righteousness* be by the Law, and if they which are of the Law be Heirs, Faith is made void, and the Promise made of no effect. Rom. 4. 14.

A Second Reason of Inconsistence between the Gospel and the Law was this, viz. that the keeping up a perpetual standing Conformity to the Rites of *Moses* would have prov'd the greatest slur and diminution to the Sacrifice of Christ, that could be. Sacrifices and Oblations, we know, were the main Essential Part of the Ceremonial Law, and therefore if that Law had stood, those must always have been offer'd; but now that they should always be so, allowing the *Jewish* Constitution to have been at least a wise one, we cannot any way suppose, unless there were some End and Reason of Necessity

SER. M. VII. *Necessity for their continuance.* But when the great Sacrifice of Christ had been once presented on the Cross, there could then be no longer Reason for any *Legal Sacrifices*, because that one of our *Blessed Saviour* was infinitely more than sufficient, for all the Purposes, for which the rest were all intended; and the whole Virtue and Efficacy which these carried in them, they derived from a secret *Typical Reference* to that of *Christ*. If those Sacrifices then must still have prevail'd in use, and so they must have done, if the Law, which prescrib'd and supported them, had remain'd in its full Force, they must either have had no end or design at all of their continuance, or it must have been *this*, to have supply'd some *Deficiency* or other in the Sacrifice of *Christ*. For since there can be no sufficient Reason assign'd for their first Institution, but that they were intended to aim and point at the great *Expiatory Sacrifice* of the *Lamb of God*, *once to be offer'd in the end of the World*, 'tis impossible therefore, to imagine any other reasonable Account that can be given for their continuance, unless it were to fill up what should some way or other be wanting in the Sacrifice of the Cross. But the least suspicion of that Nature would be no less than a *Blasphemous Reflection* on the whole Scheme of our Redemption by the Death of *Christ*. For that the *Blood of the Son of God* should need the concurrence of that of *Bulls and Goats*, to accomplish its great Designs, and to take away the Sins of the World, is an Imagination as black and impious,

Heb. 9. 26.

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pious, as it is vain and foolish to the last SER M. VII.  
degree.

Since then the great Reason given by the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, for the Removal of the *Legal Sacrifices*, was *this*, that the whole design of those Sacrifices was duly answer'd, and their numerous Defects supply'd by the infinite Merit of *Christ's Offering*, who appear'd only once in the end of the World, to Heb. 9. 26. take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself; to have insisted afterwards on the continuance of those *Legal Sacrifices* had been the greatest undervaluing and disparagement to *His* conceivable, and an Argument only of Infidelity in those that should do so, as we are sure it was in the unbelieving *Jew*. And therefore to stand up for the Necessity of the *Ceremonial Law*, after that *Christ* had once put an end to it by fulfilling the whole design of it in his own Person, is by a just Consequence from the former Supposition a slight and reproach likewise upon the *Blessed Saviour* of the World, and his most perfect Offering. Because, as I have said to this Purpose before, if the Law had remain'd in its former Obligation, Sacrifices, which were the chiefest Part of the Law, must have continued too; because Sacrifices, and the Law of Ceremonies mutually imply, and infer each other, and stand or fall together.

*Thirdly*, The Law of Ceremonies must have given Place, when *Christianity* was to prevail, because, otherwise, the great design of the Gospel upon the *Gentile World* would have been in a great Measure disappointed.

Not



SERMON VII: Not many of the Heathen Nations would have ever admitted Christianity, if it had come attended with the troublesome Observation of a Law so generally disgustful and offensive to the Sense of Men, who would therefore have rejected or quitted the Proposals and Privileges of the Gospel, to avoid the Odium, and Incumbrance, and Burden of the Law. So that, we see what mighty Reason the *Apostle* of the *Gentiles* had, to stand up for Christian Liberty, against the Legal Services; For otherwise his own Ministry must have fail'd of that general, and blessed Influence, which he so earnestly desir'd, and we are now assur'd it had in the Course of his preaching amongst the *Gentiles*. How warmly for this reason does he apply to the *Galatians*, who at that time had their Minds tortur'd and entangled with Scruples about the Law, by a sort of false, hypocritical Teachers, who only served their own base private Ends by perverting the *Gospel of Christ*! How does he, upon this occasion, rip up the Law from the very first design of its Institution, and lay open the Weakness and Insufficiency of it, to all the Purposes of true Righteousness, and appeal for the Infinite Trouble, as well as Uselessness of it, to those very Men themselves who contended most for its Necessity! And when he goes on to compare it with the infinite Benefits and Privileges of the *Gospel*, he rejects it, as not worthy to appear in Competition.

But why, may it be ask'd, does the *Apostle* thus bestir himself to prevent the Admission of the Ceremonial Law with these  
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his *Gentile Disciples*? Were the *Galatians*, who were Heathens till their Conversion, so fond of the *Law of Moses*? Had they such a strong Affection for it, that nothing less than the *Apostle's* most convincing Arguments, most powerful Entreaties, most affectionate Appeals could divert them from it? If so, this appears to overthrow the main Foundation of the present Argument, and to shew, that the Heathens had no such Aversion to the *Ceremonial Law* as we say they had; and seems to intimate rather, that they would have been glad to have taken in the Law a share with *Christianity*. In answer to this we may consider, that the *Galatians* might very well contend with a great deal of Vehemence, and Earnestness, for a Conformity to the Law, whilst they were under such Scruples or Convictions of Conscience (how false soever) about the Necessity of it to Salvation, though at the same time they had not the least Affection or Inclination towards it, for its own sake, but an Abhorrence rather and an Aversion from the Burden and Inconveniences of it, and would have been glad upon good reason to have been set free from an Opinion of its Obligation. 'Twas the same case with them in all Probability, as we are sure it was with some other *Gentile* Converts, who were once under the same Scruples and Troubles about the *Ceremonial Law*, and its Obligation; who yet, when the Council of *Jerusalem* had determin'd so favourably, and so much for their Ease in this very Point it self, as they receiv'd the decrees are said to rejoyce for the Consolation: they were glad, and

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and thought themselves happy that by a Sentence so full of Authority, as that of an Assembly of the *Apostles*, they were resolv'd in a case, which, if it had fallen otherwise, must have entangled their Practice, and harass'd their Lives with a Burden of troublesome and intricate Observances, which those very Men, who originally liv'd under them, and were most oblig'd to comply with them, could never bear themselves. And this had been indeed a sore Temptation to them, it would have gall'd and fretted their Minds under the Profession of Christianity, and one time or other perhaps have inclin'd them to have admitted Thoughts of parting with it, and returning back to their old Superstitions, more easie, and at first appearance, perhaps as reasonable as the *other*. And this might very well be another good Reason for the *Apostle* to warn his Disciples, with so much concern and care, against submitting to such a Law of laborious *Ordinances*; which though, by the pompous Solemnity of them, they might strike with Pleasure at first upon the Fancies of Men, would nevertheless in time, as the Novelty wore off, sit like a heavy Yoke upon their Neck, and dispose them to fling off at once *Christianity* it self together with them: for why not? when both had been entertain'd with an Opinion of equal Necessity.

But now, *Christianity*, as it came alone in its pure and genuine Simplicity, approv'd it self thoroughly to the general Reason of Men, to all who would but impartially attend to its Pretences; and who by the perverseness and inveterate Prejudice of former wrong  
Opinions



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Opinions had not their Minds blinded, and their Eyes and Ears shut to the powerful Convictions of its Truth and Excellency. And the longer Experience Men would have had of it, still in the Practice and Exercise of those pure and holy Duties it enjoins, they would have been still the better affected towards it, till it had gain'd upon their Mind and Reason, and settled it self in a firm and full Perswasion on their Wills.

Whereas if it had not been a *Religion* so reasonable in it self, and so perfectly agreeable to the best Sense and Relish of Mens Minds, notwithstanding all the external Evidence of a *Divine* and *Miraculous* Power, that attended its Delivery, it would never have prevail'd to so very general and noble Effects upon Mankind as we are sure it did. And yet, as I observ'd, this so ready and so general an Admission of the *Gospel* in the *Gen- tile* World would have been extreamly prejudic'd by the attendance of so burdensome a Companion as the Law of *Moses*. Men had Rites and Ceremonies and Religious Ordinances enough of their own before ; they had Sacrifices of every kind, and Washings and Lustrations, and other Bodily Exercises in their Religious Worship : But they wanted a Religion, whose Influence should reach their Souls, and contribute to their real Happiness. And this the Law of *Moses* could not do : For take the Ceremonial Law without any Spiritual Design couch'd under it, which we know it had, and as void of any significative relation to the *Evangelical* *Œconomy*, which the

SERM. VII. Heathens knew nothing of; take the Dispensation of *Moses*, merely as to the outward view of it, and we have no Grounds to conclude the *Gentiles* would have ever thought themselves in reason bound to have yielded to its Authority. In general then we may be assur'd, that the more Difficulty there would have been in recommending and enforcing the *Ceremonial* Law upon the Heathen Nations, the stronger Bar and Objection had been still put to the spreading of *Christianity*, upon this Supposition, I mean, that they had stood upon equal Necessity, and that either both together, or neither singly, must have been admitted.

I think, these Reasons against an Union of *Christianity* with *Judaism* may be enough to satisfy us of the Reasonableness of *St. Paul's* Zeal and Contention against the Injunction of the Law of *Moses* upon the Heathen Converts; there are some other Arguments of a more plausible Consideration, and though perhaps not so convincing, yet of a highly *persuasive* Influence to the same Purpose; as that the true Spirit and Genius of *Christianity* would have been in danger of being quite choak'd and stifled by such a weight of Legal Ordinances; that the Minds of Men would have been so distracted between the Necessity of so much outward Service, and at the same time inward Reformation, that they could have attended neither, in any Degree as they ought, and therefore would have been tempted to neglect both; That the Edge of their Attention might in time have been quite blunted

to Spiritual Objects, by being so much engag'd on sensible Appearances; and that because there is so much Labour of Mind requir'd to fix upon Matters of a pure and Heavenly Nature, Men might, for their own ease, have taken up *at last* with the mere Case and Shell of those Divine Mysteries, and so have rested entirely in the outward Letter of the Law, which we know was the great Miscarriage even of the *Jews* themselves, and for which they are sometimes severely rebuk'd by our *Blessed Saviour*.

These, and some other Reflections of the same Nature, might be pursued, to very good advantage to the Argument that I have already so long insisted on.

But I hasten to the other Particular, which is, to shew, That as a Conjunction of the Law of *Moses* with *Christianity* has been in the former Part of this Discourse represented as entirely inconvenient, and highly dangerous to Religion; so there cannot, *Secondly*, be urg'd with Reason, any Pretence of Necessity for such an odd Conjunction of the Law with the *Gospel*, because the utmost Design and End of the *Mosaic* Rites is more than fully answer'd by the Perfection of the *Gospel* Dispensation; which is the *Apostle's* own way of arguing in the Words of the Text, *Beware of the Concision, for we are the Circumcision*; that is, there is now no longer reason to allow the Necessity, or admit the Practice, of the outward Rite of Circumcision in the Flesh, because the proper Use of it is now pass'd over, and the great Design and End of it accomplish'd; which was to represent



SERM. VII. that Spiritual Purity and Holiness, which we *Christians* are now actually possess'd of, by the Grace of God, in the Gospel of his Son; *We are the Circumcision*; and then it follows by way of Explication, *who worship God in the Spirit*.

In speaking to this latter Part of my Text, I shall *First* inquire what there is in *Christianity* that answers the true Design of the *Mosaic Circumcision*, consider'd as one particular single Rite of that Religion.

And, *Secondly*, I shall take the Word *Circumcision* in a more large and extensive Sense, as it is comprehensive of the whole *Legal*.  
 \* Rom. 15. 8. *Obedience*, (\* for so 'tis often us'd); and shall  
 Gal. 2. 7. endeavour to shew in general, that the Gospel of *Christ* has more than satisfied for the Removal of that *Law*, by perfecting and fulfilling that *Righteousness* to all the real and substantial Effects of it, which the *Law* it self did only represent in Shadows, and at a distance.

And *First*, That there is *that* in *Christianity*, which answers the true Design of the *Jewish Circumcision*, considered only as one particular Rite of that Religion. Thus taken, it may be explain'd under a threefold Notion;

*First*, As it was in the beginning given to  
 Rom. 4. 11. *Abraham* as a Seal of the *Righteousness* of Faith which he had, being yet *uncircumcis'd*:

*Secondly*, As 'twas renew'd by *Moses*, and made the Mark of Distinction to the *Jews* from other Nations, the signal Note of God's Propriety in that People, that they were his own *peculiar*:

*Thirdly*,

*Thirdly*, As it was Figurative of that Purity and Separation from Sin, which so near a Relation, as that People stood in towards Almighty God himself, requir'd.

*First*, Let us take a view of Circumcision, as it was Instituted to Abraham, by God himself, at his entrance into a more close Communion and Covenant with him, in which case it was design'd as a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith. Now this Seal of Circumcision had a twofold Reference; From God to Abraham, signifying that God did accept, and would reward his Faith and Obedience; Again, from Abraham to God, implying his firm Faith and Dependence on him for his Blessing. But now, Christianity carries all these Privileges much higher, and draws the Security between Heaven and Earth much firmer, and infers a more immediate Communion, and more excellent Covenant between God and Man, than ever was establish'd before. For as to the Righteousness of Faith, of which Circumcision was the Seal to Abraham, the Cardinal Doctrine of the Gospel is Justification, or Righteousness imputed to us by Faith in the Mercy of God by Jesus Christ. I am not asham'd, says St. Paul, Rom. i. 16, of the Gospel of Christ, for therein, as the main principal Point, is the Righteousness of God reveal'd, from Faith to Faith, that is, our Justification by Faith in Christ is fully and clearly represented in the Gospel of our Saviour, in order to raise in us a greater degree of Faith, and a firmer dependence on his Goodness. And 'twas the Publication of this great Salutory Doctrine of our Justifi-

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Rom. 3. 24.  
25.

Exod. 4. 25.

2 Tim. 2. 19.

on by Faith in Jesus Christ, that is made the chief Design of his being sent into the World, *for we are justified freely by his Grace, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through Faith in his Blood.* So that now we have all the Evidence that God will accept of our Faith, and that we shall receive the End of it, *the Salvation of our Souls*, that we could possibly desire; in that the Covenant of Reconciliation is now fully confirm'd and ratified to us in the *Blood of Christ*, as it was to *Abraham* only in the *Blood of Circumcision*; for that, we know from the Protestation of *Zipporah* to *Moses*, was a *sanguinary Rite*, and from her passionate Words to him on the account of her Son's Circumcision, *surely a bloody Husband art thou to me.* So that, we see the *Foundation of God*, or, as it should be render'd, the *Covenant of God*, *standeth sure, having this Seal*, with this double Reference, *God accepts those that believe*; and on the other hand, we are firmly to depend upon him, to believe and hope in him for that Happiness, of which he has given us the highest Assurance in the *Blood of his only Son.*

Secondly, Circumcision may be consider'd, not only as 'twas given to *Abraham* at first, but as 'twas repeated and enjoyned by *Moses*, and intended, under that Law, as a Mark of Distinction to the *Jews* from other Nations; and as a Note of God's Propriety in them, that they were his own peculiar People. And as to this Point, are not *Christians* infinitely more taken into the Protection of *God*, and the Embraces of his Favour, who, by the Co-  
venant



venant between God and them, are separated SERM. VII.  
 to his Service, and by the Benefits of it in-  
 titled to Privileges above all the People of  
 the Earth? Ye are a chosen Generation, says  
 the Apostle, speaking to Christians, a royal 1 Pet. 2. 9.  
 Priesthood, a holy Nation, a peculiar People,  
 that you should shew forth the Praises of him  
 who hath call'd you out of Darkness into his  
 marvellous Light.

The Spirit of God, which resides in the  
 Hearts of good Men, is that Stamp and Cha-  
 racter of Propriety, which God has set upon  
 Christians, whereby they are known and di-  
 stinguished to be his: 'Tis by the Spirit of  
 God that we are seal'd to the Day of Redemp-  
 tion; seal'd, that is mark'd out and reserv'd  
 for everlasting Happiness. St. Paul tells us,  
 that if a Man have not the Spirit of Christ, he Rom. 8. 9.  
 is none of his; and we may as well argue re-  
 versely, in the affirmative, that he properly  
 belongs to Christ, that has the Holy Spirit  
 abiding in him. So much Advantage then  
 has the Christian, in vertue of his holy and  
 excellent Religion, above what the Jew could  
 ever pretend to, on the account of Circumci-  
 sion, in these two former respects, as it impli-  
 ed the Seal and Token of a Covenant between  
 God and the Faithful; or as by it they were  
 divided and distinguished from all other Peo-  
 ple, and reputed the peculiar Favourites of  
 Heaven.

And if we look upon Circumcision under the  
 third and last Notion, as it was some way fi-  
 gurative of that Purity and Abstraction of  
 Soul from Sin, which so near a Relation, as  
 that People had to God himself, requir'd; here  
 likewise

SER. M. VII. likewise we shall find the *Christian Religion* exceeds the *Jewish* to an infinite Advantage. 'Tis one express Part of the first Contract between God and every *Christian*, *Let him that names the name of Christ depart from Iniquity*: And the *Apostle St. Peter* infers it as a just Consequence from a *Christian's* being so nearly ally'd to God, that he should refrain and keep himself at the greatest distance from all Sin and Impurity; *Which in time past*, says he, *were not a People, but are now the People of God*; from whence it follows in the next Verse, *Dearly beloved, I beseech you as Strangers and Pilgrims abstain from fleshly Lusts which war against the Soul*.

The *Ceremonial Law* was chiefly employ'd in external Sprinklings and Purgations, which, when the *Legal Pollution* was taken off, very often left the *Mind* and *Conscience* still defil'd, stooping under the *Guilt*, and subjected to the *Power of Sin*. But the *Laws of Christ* regard principally the inward Purity and Integrity of the *Heart*, and acquit or condemn a *Man* as to the main, from what passes within himself. The *Gospel* of our *Saviour* severely censures, and restrains the least Irregularity of a *Man's Thoughts*; checks and controlls the first *Risings* and original *Motions of Sin* within his *Heart*, does not excuse the careless Glance of an *Eye*, and makes a *Man* condemn himself for those secret Slips of his own *Thoughts*, which none can witness against him. For the *Word of God* is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edg'd *Sword*, piercing even to the dividing asunder the *Soul* and *Spirit*, the *Joints* and

and Marrow, and is a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart. SER M. VII.

That the particular Rite of Circumcision was intended by Almighty God to represent a Purity of this nature, and was therefore imprinted on the Body, as a Token and Memorial of Restraint upon fleshly Lusts, is universally agreed. But how ineffectual this was to curb and confine the Desires of Men within due Bounds, and to tame and subdue their disorderly Inclinations, we may quickly perceive, and as sadly lament, if we look into the Accounts of the Jewish Morals: When a Regard to all true Sanctity was almost quite lost amongst that People, and a meere outside Worship thought by the most Learned of their Doctors, to answer the full Intentions of the Law. And we are not so much to wonder at this, when we consider, how utterly weak and ineffectual a mere outward Sign and Representation in the Flesh, as Circumcision was, must be to reform the Lives of Men, in comparison of a strict and peremptory Law, such as that of the Gospel, impos'd upon the Minds and Spirits of Men, and enjoyn'd under the most powerful and prevailing Sanctions. Taking then all these Arguments together, and setting the Perfection and Excellency of the Gospel against the Weakness of outward Circumcision, we may now very reasonably ask the Apostle's Question in the third Chapter to the Romans, *What Advantage then hath the Jew, or what Profit is there of Circumcision?* why, truly none at all, if we balance it with the much greater Perfection and high Privileges of the Gospel of Christ, which



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Rom. 2. 28,  
29.

which every way, we see, supplies the Defects, and exceeds the Advantages of *Judaism* in this first great distinguishing Article of it, *Circumcision*, so much insisted on in the Body of the *Law* it self, and so much vaunted of by the Professors of it. Which plainly shews us, that *Circumcision* was never truly able to support so great a Weight and Stress as was always laid upon it, nor was ever intended as a lasting Instance of true Righteousness, but only to represent and presignifie to us, what should be so, in the Ages to come, which we our selves so happily enjoy. *For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit and not in the Letter; which Circumcision we Christians therefore are, who worship God in the Spirit.*

It remains only now that I endeavour to give some Satisfaction to the last Enquiry; where, taking *Circumcision* in a larger Sense, not for one particular Rite of the *Jewish* Religion, but as it is comprehensive of the whole Legal Obedience together, I am to shew in general how the Gospel of *Christ* has more than satisfy'd for the Removal of the Law, by compleating that Righteousness as to all the real Effects and substantial Purposes of it, which the Law of *Moses* could not do, and which it could only represent in faint Shadows and at a distance.

Now in comparing different Religions together, which is the present case, there are three things to be consider'd, from which  
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we are to take a true Estimate of the Preference of one above another. SERM. VII.

*First*, As one is a greater Trial of Mens Obedience and Subjection to God's Will, than another.

*Secondly*, As it is more really perfective of Human Nature.

*Thirdly*, As it is a better Preparative to Mens Happiness. Each of which would bear a longer Discourse than the present Opportunity will allow me; I shall therefore dispatch them all in as few Words as possible, and shew upon what a mighty Disadvantage the *Mosaic* Institution must appear in every one of these, when it comes to stand in competition with *Christianity*.

The *First* measure then, by which we are to rate the Gospel above the Law of *Moses*, is, that it was a more perfect Trial of Mens Obedience and Subjection to the Will of God than the other; because, as the Nature of Man stood then, and still stands corrupted, the Duties it enforces upon the Consciences of Men, are of a more sublime and difficult nature, than those of the *Law*, and therefore, by submitting to them we more effectually renounce our own Wills in Obedience to the Will of God. To crucifie a Lust, or mortifie a strong irregular Passion, puts a Man upon greater Pains and Reluctance with himself, than he can be at in passing thro' a long Course and Order of ceremonial Services, whose Execution depends, from without, upon the Strength and Ministry of his bodily Powers. And yet this was all that the Institution of *Moses*, as it was properly

SERMON VII.  perly ceremonial, pretended to impose. For we are not here to consider the Moral Duties of that Religion, for these don't properly fall within the compass of *Circumcision*, taken in the most extended Sense of it, and therefore no Man that is a *Christian* will contend for their Abrogation, nor did the *Apostle* ever design so much in his Advice and Caution to his *Disciples* in my Text.

Now there hardly needs any other Argument to prove the great Disproportion there is between the spiritual Duties of *Christianity*, and the carnal Ordinances of the *Law*, in Point of Difficulty, than what we may observe from the general Practice of some part of the World at present. Let us consider only the *Christian* Religion it self, as it stands laden with Superstition in the *Church of Rome*, with a burden of Observances heavier than ever *Judaism* it self enjoin'd, upon the Patience and Practice of its Professors, so that one may venture to say, the little finger of *Papery* is heavier than *Moses* loyns; And yet if Men can but be allow'd to retain their Lusts in that Religion, if they can but quietly indulge a darling Vice, and by any means evade the strictness and severity of a Precept of the *Gospel*, however indispensable in its own Nature, what outward Penance will they not submit to, and what Disadvantages either in their Persons, or Fortunes, will they not readily embrace, rather than be at the Expence of reforming a perverse Temper, and checking the violent Stream of corrupt Desires? A crafty Hypocrite will easily compound for his real Duty, with as much seeming



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seeming external Sanctity as shall be requir'd S E R M. VII.  
of him, if he can, by the help of it, but contrive to impose upon his own Conscience, and other Mens Opinions of him. And this is enough to satisfy us, if there were no other Argument, that a true thorow Obedience to the Laws of our *Saviour* in crucifying a Man's inordinate Inclinations, and subduing and rectifying a vicious Habit of Soul, requires greater Contention of Mind, and engages a Man in a far more ungrateful Contest with himself, than he is put to, in any external Formalities of religious Worship whatsoever: Because the generality of Men, we see, so willingly accept the *latter*, if they can but be any way excus'd from the Necessity of the *former*. And therefore since those Laws of *Moses*, against which we are now contending, were of the same Rank, and Character with other external Services of Religion, if we understand any thing of the true nature and design of *Christianity*, we must own that a real and hearty Submission to the Laws of *Christ* must carry in it much higher Proofs of our Obedience to God's Will than the most exact Conformity to the Law of Ordinances could possibly have given. But this is not all;

For, *Secondly*, The Religion of our *Saviour* is truly perfective of human Nature, and will, if attended to with the Care and Sincerity that it ought to be, raise and exalt our Minds to the highest Degrees of Purity of which they are capable in the present State. But now the Law of *Moses* could never make the Conscience of any Man that came thereon perfect, in

**SERM. VII.** in another Sense, besides that the *Apostle* chiefly intended by those Expressions; That is, it never truly consider'd the real Interest of his spiritual Estate, never laid before him Precepts that so nearly concern'd his Life, nor presented him with those divine Assistances which should carry him so much above what he is by the State of his deprav'd Nature, as 'tis necessary he should be, if ever he will be perfect and happy.

For *Thirdly*, and to conclude all, *Christianity* is the only Preparative for a Man's highest Happiness, both by way of natural Efficacy, and by God's Appointment. It qualifies a Man with those noble Dispositions of Soul, and implants in him those Seeds and Principles of *Divine Life*, by which he rises up at last into a Likeness and Conformity to God himself, the most perfect and best of Beings, in the Enjoyment of whom the utmost Stress and Capacity of his Desires will find its perfect Satisfaction and Accomplishment. 'Tis

*Eph. i. 18.* by this he is made *meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the Saints in light*, and by  
*Psal. 17. 15.* thus *awaking up after the likeness of God* he is sure to be *satisfied with it*.

Besides it is the Declaration and Promise of God himself express'd in the *Gospel* of his Son, that every good Christian shall thus be perfectly happy; without which Promise, no natural Perfection, or Improvement of our Souls whatever, could give us that sure Evidence we should be happy, as we could desire. For after all our best Preparations for it, *Eternal Life* is still the *gift of God*, which we could put in no claim to, without his Word, nor receive without his infinite Mercy. And

*Rom. 6. 23.*







And could ever the Law of *Moses*, whose SERM. VII. Influence went no further than the Body, and lay in Washings and Sprinklings and other worldly Ordinances, could such a Constitution as that, think we, prepare and qualify a Soul for Heaven? We are sure that *Moses* never did sufficiently discover the Certainty of a future State, so far as to give a very lively Encouragement to the hopes of Men, or much to raise and quicken their Endeavours after it. If any Man, under this *low* Dispensation had better Evidence of these things, as we are sure *some* had, 'twas by a higher Spirit than that of *Moses*, and by a larger View, than ever his Ascent to the top of Mount *Nebo* could have given him. And Dent. 34. 1. the Reason was, because the clear Discovery of an eternal State of Happiness in another World was reserv'd for a more perfect Revelation than that of *Moses* was ever intended to be; it was neither amongst the express Conditions of his Covenant, nor the sure Object of Mens Hopes and Expectations, upon their most exact Compliance with the Terms of it. For the way within the Heb. 9. 8. Vail, into the holiest of all, was not yet made manifest; whilst the first Tabernacle was yet standing. But Christ being come an high Priest of Heb. 9. 11. good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, by his own blood he enter'd in once into the Holy place, and made way for us to follow him, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

*The Grace of God shewn to be not only  
consistent with the Liberty of Man's  
Will, but the strongest Obligation to  
our own Endeavours in our Duty.*

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the  
University of Oxon at St. Mary's,  
Sunday, Sept. 6. 1702.

PHIL. II. 12, 13.

— *Work out your own Salvation with  
fear and trembling; For it is God  
which worketh in you to will and to  
do, of his good pleasure.*

**N**EXT to those Controversies, that  
immediately touch'd the *Christian  
Faith*, in its nearest and fundamental  
*Articles*, there were none, that, for several  
Ages of the Church, gave a more general  
Disturbance to its Peace, than those warm  
Disputes, that arose about the Extent of *Di-  
vine Grace*, and its Consistence with the free-  
doms



*dom of Man's Will*, in the Business of his Duty. Some Persons there were, of a too forward and mistaken Zeal, who imagin'd there was no other way to secure the Reputation of the *Gospel of Christ*, or to carry the Glory of it higher, but by making Grace to triumph upon the Ruins of Nature, and by supposing the Mind of Man to be purely *passive* and *ineffective* in the Work of his Conversion and Duty. Whilst others in the mean time apprehended, and *that* rightly enough, that by this Method too much was indeed given away from the Perfection of human Nature, and that to explain the Operation of Grace, in a Sense so far as this, was to overthrow the very Design and Nature of Religion; which as it is founded upon Reason, so it supposes some kind of Liberty and Choice in the Subjects capable of it. And had the Men of this Opinion stopp'd here, there had been nothing in their Doctrine, but what had been very reconcilable with the Dictates both of Reason and Religion. But here was their Unhappiness, that having rescued human Liberty from the Cramps and Inconvenience it had suffer'd under the former Doctrine, they seem to have grown wanton in their Victory, and, out of a too fond and partial Conceit of the Powers and Abilities of a deprav'd *Will*, gave too great a *loose* to its *freedom*, and advanc'd it in Opposition to the *Grace of God* it self. Whilst they erroneously maintain'd, that a Man by the mere *inbred original* forces of his own Nature, without the Assistance of any Foreign accidental Supplies of *Divine Grace*, was Self-

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sufficient

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sufficient to all the Purposes of his Duty and Obedience; So far as was necessary to recommend him to God's Favour, and give him a Title to eternal Happiness.

These latter Tenets, we know, were the Heretic of *Pelagius*, and his Followers, which thus enlarg'd the Liberty of Man beyond all Reason, and against the universal Consent and Declarations of *Holy Writ*: As the former, which bound up the Freedom of the Will within too narrow Restraints, and left it without all Life and Motion, merely passive and receptive of Influences from above, were the mistaken Opinion of some *Christian Fatalists* in the early Ages of the Church, and seem of late to have been reviv'd by *Calvin*, and his Disciples, the great Patrons of *irresistible Grace*.

The *Truth* it self indeed lies in the *middle* between both these Opinions, and was therefore not observ'd of either, because they both ran into the Extreame of Error, a quite contrary way, at an infinite distance from the *Truth*, and from each other. And the *Holy Spirit of God*, which comprehends all the distant Periods and Exigences of the Church within his Knowledge at one view, and foresaw the Mistakes and Disputes of Men, that would arise upon this Point, long before they happen'd, seems by the Ministry of *St. Paul*, to have here *levell'd* a Doctrine directly against *both* these foremention'd Errors; that should be sure to meet with them upon either hand, and which way soever they might turn themselves in succeeding Ages: Whilst *at the same time* it assigns and ascribes the Work of our Salvation to our own Care and Endeavours,

Endeavours, *that* it asserts the Necessity of SERM. VIII. God's Grace and Assistance. And, by so doing, gives a check, at once, both to our Sloth, and our Presumption, by letting us understand that *Something* is, and that *All* is not, within our Power; in these Words, *Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling; For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure.*

There are *Four* things that very naturally offer themselves to be consider'd upon these Words, as either plainly express'd, or directly implied in them, which shall therefore be the Matter of my Discourse upon this Subject.

*First* then, The Reasonableness of the Apostle's Charge to *work out our own Salvation* supposes some kind of *Liberty* in our Wills, and a Possibility of our own Endeavours, in the Matters of our Obedience. I shall therefore shew that we have such a *Principle of Liberty* within us, and how, since the Original Fall of Man, we came by it.

*Secondly*, I shall make it my Endeavour to prove, that this *freedom* of our Wills, and careful Exercise of our own Endeavours are very well consistent and reconcilable with the *Grace of God* co-operating with us, and that our own Industry and the *Divine Grace* do not in the least infringe, but mutually require, and assist each other.

*Thirdly*, I shall endeavour to infer the *Necessity*, and to inforce the *Obligation* to our own Care and Diligence in our Duty, from this very Principle, *because the Grace of God works with us*, and enables us *to will and do*



SERMON VIII. *of his good Pleasure: And this, according to the Apostle's own way of reasoning in the Text, Work out your own Salvation, For 'tis God that worketh in you.* And,

*Fourthly*, I shall consider the just Importance of those high Expressions of *fear and trembling* under which we are here commanded by the *Apostle* to *work out our own Salvation*, and shall justify the strictness of the Charge he delivers to us upon this Matter.

And, *First*, That the Reasonableness of the *Apostle's* Charge to work out our own Salvation, supposes some kind of *Liberty* in our Wills, and a Possibility of our own Endeavours in the Matters of our Obedience. I shall therefore shew, that we have such a *Principle of Liberty* within us, and how, since the *Original Fall* of Man, we came by it.

Now 'tis certain that we do find such a *Principle of Liberty* within us in general; and our Mind seems to be so infinitely fond and jealous of the Honour and Reputation of it, as very often to vindicate *that*, in opposition to its clearest Convictions of Interest and Duty. The Soul of Man, rather than it will admit a *Chain* upon its Faculties, or lye down under the Reproach and Censure of an injurious Confinement, will venture to break through all Restraints how just soever; so that even the Bonds of Nature or Religion shall no longer hold it, when the Reputation of its *Liberty* appears concern'd; rather than not seem free to do *any thing* it will venture to do *Evil*, though it be ruin'd by the Consequences.

Indeed

Indeed this is none of the Privileges of our Freedom, that we are able thus to determine our selves to Evil; but rather the greatest Imperfection of it; in as much as the most perfect *Beings*, even *God himself*, who is the very *Centre* of all Perfection in his own Nature, and the true Standard and Measure of it to the reasonable World, even *God himself* who acts most *freely*, and in the noblest manner, can yet never, by reason of a happy Necessity in his own Nature, turn himself to *Evil*. His Will is invariably determin'd towards Goodness, and in every Design and Act of his, he can project and aim at nothing else. And the Blessed *Angels* themselves, that resemble the Great *Father of Spirits* in their Nature, and transcribe him in their Actions, have, ever since their Confirmation in *Glory*, had their Wills bound up from Evil by a Restraint upon them as fixed and peremptory, as the Eternal Laws of *Destiny* it self. And yet we must not suppose them to be ever the less *free* for all this, and it would be an Injury to their excellent and exalted Nature to conceive them so.

So that 'tis Man alone, as far as we are left at present to apprehend, that has the double Edge of *Liberty* in his Hand, and we have reason to conclude 'tis his Impotency that he has so; and we are sure 'tis his great Unhappiness that he too often pierces and wounds his own Soul with a Misuse of it. But then this sufficiently justifies the Wisdom and Goodness of *Almighty God*, that he made us at first *free* to *Good* as well

SERM. VIII. as *Evil*, and at the same time put such Principles of Light and Strength within our Nature, so strong a Propensity to our own Happiness, and such a clear and actual Knowledge of the ways that lead to it, as thereby to direct our Choice with Advantage, and to dispose and sway our Wills towards the better Part.

But how much of this Original Liberty remains to the Posterity of *Adam*, through the Ruins of Paradise, or whether the Liberty of Man's Will to Good be entirely forfeited by the Fall, there lies the Question not so very easie to be resolv'd; because we are not so certainly inform'd from what Perfection we are fallen, nor into what degrees of Degeneracy and Corruption we are sunk: *In general*, this I think we may determine safely, that the Powers of our Soul are so exceedingly *bruis'd* and *enfeebled* by the prevarication of our first *Parents*, that our Natural Inclinations run only to *Evil*, and that, before our New Birth and Regeneration in *Christ* our Saviour, to do good, and thereby to procure the Favour of *God*, we have no Power.

Not that we are to understand this so very strictly, *neither*, as that a Person in the mere State of Nature, and without the Covenant of Grace, cannot do some such Works of Goodness, as are, in their *Substance* and *Matter*, conformable to the Law of *God* and Nature; but that he cannot do them in such *Perfection*, upon such *Principles*, and with such due Circumstances, merely by the strength of his Natural Powers, as shall recommend them



them to God's Acceptance and Approbation, in vertue of their own intrinsic worth. For 'tis indeed the *form* of an Action, the Reasons and Motives *upon* which, and the way and manner *in* which 'tis done, that give it its true Distinction, and entitle it either Good or Evil. So that, by the way, we have the greatest reason to stand up, and contend strenuously for the *Doctrine* of our own excellent *Church*, when \* it tells us, to this Purpose, that the Actions of *unregenerate* and *natural* Men, however suitable to the Law of Nature, and Reason, as to the matter of them, are yet doubtless sinful in their Nature, and merit the Displeasure of *Almighty God*. So far indeed as they are materially conformable to the Law of God and Reason, so far we are sure they are without the least Degree or Tincture of Sin, nor in that Sense is it the design of our *Church's* Doctrine to intimate they have *any*. But then so far as they are done upon false Principles, and with undue Circumstances, neither for the *sake*, nor in the *Name* of *Christ*, nor for the Honour of God; but suppose out of Natural Temper, or for some Temporal Regard, it may be, of Reputation, or Interest, or the like, or for some other indirect Purpose; so taken, and so qualified, there is no question, but the Actions of *unregenerate*, mere Natural Men, carry a Guilt in them, which justly makes them liable to the *Divine Displeasure*, and have no Title to the Merits of *Christ* to plead for their acceptance.

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\* Article XIII. Of Works before Justification.

And



And thus far, we are sure that even the good Actions of *Christians* themselves, when done upon an irregular Motive, and with unsuitable Circumstances, take upon them the Nature, and are entitled to the Portion of *sinful* Actions. Thus even our very *Prayers* are turn'd into Sin, when not offer'd up with Faith and Sincerity, and Resolutions of Obedience; the very *Incense* of our *Devotions* stinks in the Presence of *Almighty God*, when Vanity and Hypocrisie hold the *Censer*. And our *Charity* and *Alms* become our Condemnation, when Pride or Vain-glory go before them. So that without any just Reproach to Human Nature, or any too severe Reflection upon the Heathen World, we may and must assent to the *Doctrine* of our *Church*, that *unregenerate* and *natural* Men have no free Will or Liberty to produce good Works, that God is any way oblig'd either to accept or to reward: For this very Reason, because they cannot perform those Works upon such Principles as God is pleas'd with, who has render'd our Persons and our Actions *accepted to himself only in his beloved Son*: And all other Principles besides, which 'tis possible for them to proceed upon, we are sure must be irregular, and sinful, because they are not the true ones.

Thus far then it appears, what that *Liberty* is, which a Man Originally has by his Birth, as he is a Man, and which remains to him under all, the disadvantages of a broken and impair'd Nature. Such a Liberty indeed, as, almost, by a fatal tendency, carries him to Evil; under which, all the Pow-

ers of his Mind are bent and crooked, bow-  
ed down with a Spirit of Infirmary, and  
cannot lift up themselves to any noble Pur-  
poses of real Goodness. In short, such a Li-  
berty as the Apostle describes, under which a  
Man is a Servant of Sin, and free from Right-  
ousness, hurried on to the one by the Stream  
of corrupt Affections and Inclinations, and  
able to make no Progress to the other, with-  
out the greatest Reluctancy, and Violence  
done to himself.

SERM. VIII.

Rom. 6. 20.

But we are bound to thank the infinite  
Mercy of God, that this is not the Liberty  
of a Christian, though it be of a Man, of  
one born and continuing in his primitive  
and unregenerate State. For, by the Privi-  
lege of our New Birth, and by the means of  
Baptismal Grace, a Man is now restor'd, if  
not to the whole Birth-right of his Liberty  
which he lost in Adam, yet to such De-  
grees and Portions of it, as are necessary to  
lay a Foundation in him of that Obedience  
which the New Covenant requires. 'Tis the  
Washing of Regeneration, that supplies the  
Stubbornness of his distorted Nature, and  
opens a Passage for new Life and Vigour to  
convey themselves in, through his feeble and  
fainting Soul. 'Tis the Spirit of God in Bap-  
tism, that revives and re-entkindles those  
Sparks and Reminders of Life, which have  
escap'd the Deluge of Original Corruption,  
and recovers them once more into a perfect  
Day. 'Tis this, that delivers us from the  
Body and Power of Death, and adopts us in-  
to the Liberty of the Children of God, and  
gives us the Victory over Sin through our Lord

Tit. 3. 5.

Rom. 8. 21.

1 Cor. 15. 57.

Jesus



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John 8. 36.

*Jesus Christ.* And being thus made free by the Son of God, we are free indeed; the ancient Charter of our Liberty is restor'd, the Breaches of our Nature are repair'd, and we are in a great measure reinvested with original Perfection.

From what has been said then, it appears that when we speak of the Freedom of Will in a Man consider'd under his *natural* and *unregenerate* State, and of his Liberty as a *Christian*, we proceed upon quite another Ground, and by very different Measures. For, in the former case, the little Freedom, that he has, comes to him in the right and vertue of his being a Man, of such a Rank and Order of *reasonable Beings*, from which some degree of Liberty or other seems inseparable by the Constitution of Nature it self: Whereas, on the other side, the Liberty in which a *Christian* is instated, though it be indeed *Natural*, in this Sense, that it does not rise above the Proportion of Human Nature, as it first came out of the Hands of God, and is really no more, consider'd in it self, than what Man by Nature was once possess'd of in the State of his Integrity; yet when we look into the Manner and Methods by which, in this our lapsed State, we recover our Freedom again, we are sure that the same perfect Liberty, which was once the State of our newly-created Nature, if ever it becomes ours again, as I have shewn it does in a great measure, 'tis only by an Act of *Divine Grace* and Favour. The same Liberty we receiv'd *once* by the Laws of our Creation, we *now* hold, and must acknowledge

knowledge we do so, in the Right of our *Redemption.* SERM. VIII.

So that as we are *Christians*, and are admitted within the Privileges of the *Evangelical* State, we ought indeed never to consider the Liberty of our Wills as separate and independent of all *Grace of God* whatever, since, as we have seen already, the Recovery of our Liberty was purely the Result and Effect of *God's free Grace*, at first, and the formal Strength and Perfection of this Liberty, when recover'd, is nothing else, but the *Grace of God preventing us*. The Reason, why we are so apt to mistake this Freedom, that we thus receive by *Grace*, for a mere *natural Power and Ability* in our Souls, seems to be this; that though we are not indeed born with it, yet we receive it in *Baptism*, before we can remember, and by the Mercies of the *Gospel*, and the religious Care of our *Holy Mother the Church*, we cannot assign the Time, backwards, when we had it nor. So that our *Christian Liberty*, which is nothing really but the *Grace of God preventing us*, grows up indeed with us, and accompanies us all along, from the Tenderness of our Childhood, and follows us through all the different Stages of our Life. And thus, because we never found our selves otherwise than free, upon that account 'tis, that we come to misapprehend our Liberty as the Result of our being *Men*, which it is indeed only of our being *Christians*, and to look upon it as a Consequent of our *Natural*, when really 'tis of our *Spiritual Birth*.

But

But if, when we come to Years of Understanding, we had then the sad Experience of an unregenerate Nature, labouring under the full Load and Surfeit of Original Corruption; Could we but imagine with what vain and ineffectual Strugglings, under such a State as this, with what Agonies of Soul, and Contention of Spirit, we should then aspire, in vain, after the Performance of the least part of that *Christian Righteousness*, which we are now enabled to fulfil thro' *Christ that strengthens us*; we should then be quickly convinc'd of the miserable Weakness and Insufficiency of our own Nature, when left to it self, and of our utter Inability of chusing or doing what is good, in the mere Strength and Vertue of our natural Freedom. How earnestly should we then cry out with the *Apostle*, in the Person of an unregenerate Man, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death! from this Bondage of Corruption, into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God!*

Rom. 7. 24.

From hence then we may observe, how infinitely great and glorious are the Gospel-Privileges, and of how unspeakable Importance are the Benefits of *Baptism*; in that our Liberty of Will, which is the great Prerogative of a reasonable Creature, is therein restored and confirmed to us, by a *second Covenant*, which was so entirely lost and forfeited by our prevaricating with the Conditions of the *First*. For all the Liberty, as I have already shewn, that we have now to do good, and to please God, and indeed all that ever any mere Man since *Adam*



dam ever had, must be now no longer con- SER M VIII.  
sider'd as the Endowment of his Nature,  
but as the pure Effect of *Divine Grace* and  
Favour, purchas'd and convey'd to us, in  
vertue of the *New Testament*, founded in  
the Merits and Death of our *Blessed Sa-*  
*viour*.

And howsoever God was pleas'd in the  
first and early Ages of the World to dispense  
this *Grace of Liberty* to Men, in *what Mea-*  
*sures*, and to *whom*, and upon *what Condi-*  
*tions* he saw best; yet now, under the *Evan-*  
*gical Economy*, God, has thought fit to  
restrain and confine the Distribution of it to  
our *Baptism*, the *Sacrament* of our *Regenerati-*  
*on*. So that speaking indeed *properly*, and con-  
sidering Men as *Christians*, when we at any  
time oppose the present *Freedom* of our Will  
to the *Grace* of God, we do but oppose  
*Grace* to *Grace*, a *preventing* to an *assisting*  
*Grace*, one Degree of it to another, a less  
and more ordinary and standing Measure of  
it, which is infus'd into every Man at his  
New Birth, and necessary to make him free,  
to those successive, and more extraordinary  
Supplies of it afterwards, which a Man comes  
to receive from God upon his right Use and  
Employment of the former.

I have thus consider'd what the Liberty of  
a *Christian* is, how it differs from that of an  
unregenerate Man, and by what Means and  
Methods, since the original Forfeiture of  
human *Liberty*, a Man comes to be reinsta-  
ted in the Possession of it; and that is, by the  
*Renewal* and *Reparation* of his natural Powers  
in the *Holy font of Baptism*. That 'tis by

ver-

SERM. VIII. virtue of this blessed Institution, that a Man is no longer under the miserable Condition, describ'd by the *Apostle*, of a mere carnal Person, bound and hamper'd in the Captivity of Sin, and enslav'd under the Dominion and Tyranny of it; having his Will and Affections stubborn and perverse, and running counter to the clearest Sense and Judgment of his Reason; which, while it allows the Excellency of God's Laws, and acknowledges the Obligation of them, cannot yet prevail upon the inferior Powers for a Conformity and Obedience to them. So that in this case what a Man would, that is, what he approves, in his sober Sense and Judgment, that he does not, but what he hates that he does, having another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin. But this, as I told you, is not the Condition of *Christians*, neither will it be the Condemnation of them that are in *Christ Jesus*, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit; for the law of the spirit of life which is in *Christ Jesus*, that is the Power and Energy of our New Birth, and that Principle of Grace, we receive therein, hath given us true Liberty, and made us free from the law of sin and death, from our being Slaves to the one, and for ever liable to the Power of the other.

What I have further to be consider'd on the present Point, is this, that 'tis in the strength and virtue of this Principle of Life and Liberty received in our *Baptism*, that, without any other Assistance of *Supervient Grace*, a Man is enabled at any time of his After-

Life after, to enter upon the Beginnings of, and move the first Steps towards his own Repentance and Conversion from a sinful State. For that so much as this must be allowed after *Baptism* to be within a Man's Power, is evident from hence, that, upon a contrary Supposition, all the Commands, and Exhortations, and Expostulations of *Almighty God*, wherein he calls upon us to repent, and turn to our Duty, would be perfectly groundless and unreasonable. For why should a Man be thus summon'd to amend his Life, and be justly liable to God's Displeasure for the neglect of doing so, if the first Movement, and Preparation to such a Design, were not within the reach of his Liberty, or if he had no Principle within him whereby he could determine his Actions another way?

I would not here be understood, to say, that the Beginnings and first Principle of a Man's Conversion to a religious Obedience are, at any time, within the Verge and Compass of any mere *natural* Powers and Abilities, that remain to him after his original Lapse in *Adam*. For this indeed was the *Heretical* Doctrine of the *Semi-Pelagians*, for which they have been always justly censur'd and condemn'd by the Church of *Christ*: who were herein distinguished from the *thorough-pac'd* Disciples of *Pelagius*, that they would allow only the Beginnings of a Man's Repentance to be in his natural Power, without any Assistance or Prevention of *Divine Grace*: whereas *Pelagius* himself, and those that were his strict Followers, contended that both the Beginning and the Comple-

tion



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tion of Repentance were no more than the pure Effect of unassisted Nature. But now, for a Man to assert, that from a Principle of *preventing Grace* laid and hidden in our Nature, at our Regeneration in *Baptism*, we are enabled to move our selves without any other Help some of the first Degrees towards our Amendment, is a Doctrine that does not in the least derogate from the *Grace of God*, because it does not advance the Strength of Nature above its due Proportion, in that it supposes Nature to work only in the Power and Efficacy of *Grace* it self.

Upon this ground then, we are to reject the unreasonable and *unintelligible Cant* of some *Mens Divinity*, when they tell us, that 'tis impossible for a Man to repent 'till his *Day of Grace* is come; that there is a certain time appointed, till when we are to wait for the Incomes of the *Spirit*, without which a Man can do nothing for himself; that there is some *critical Minute* of a Man's Life, wherein *God* makes a very plentiful *Manifestation* of his *Grace* to his *Chosen*, and that then they shall be able and willing to turn to him, and before that 'tis impossible they should. This is the Sum of their Opinion, and, if this Doctrine be true, then 'tis certain, that these *Mens Impotence*, which is sometimes for the greatest part of their Lives, is not their Fault; and yet, that it should not be so, is beyond any Man's Skill to justify, from any Passage that gives countenance to it throughout the whole *Gospel* of our *Saviour*. For we find there

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no such Distinctions of Times or Seasons made; but are call'd upon at *all times* to consider, and take care, that we are not cut off in the Course of our Sins; and while we wait for *Light*, for a time of Repentance hereafter, are plung'd in utter Darkness, where there can be no Repentance, and from which there is no Return. And such frequent Advices and Admonitions of this nature, so *pathetically* address'd to Men, at all times without distinction, and upon all occasions, do manifestly suppose, that it is within our own Liberty to enter upon a new Course of Life, when we will, and that it is our great Sin, and will be our Condemnation to neglect it.

Having thus endeavour'd to shew, that we have a Principle of Liberty in our Wills, and what is the Rule and Foundation of it as we are *Christians*, I shall now go on to the next thing propos'd, which was to prove,

*Secondly*, That this freedom of our Wills, and careful Exercise of our own Endeavours, in the matter of our Duty, are very well consistent, and reconcilable with the Grace of God assisting us; and that our own Industry and the *Divine Grace* do not in the least interfere with, but mutually require and assist each other. And this is no more than an immediate Inference and Collection from the Words of the *Apostle*, taken all together, who bids us *work out our own Salvation*, and at the same time tells us that *it is God who worketh in us to will, and to do of his good pleasure*.

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By which Discourse of the *Apostle*, the least, we can understand, is this, that how much soever *God* does for us, in preparing us for our *Salvation*, by quickening and exciting our Obedience to his Will, which is the Condition of our being *sav'd*, yet there is something that he still leaves to be done by our selves; and that he does not, by the Efficacy of his Grace upon the Minds of Men, so far controul their *Freedom*, or necessitate their Obedience, as to render their own Endeavours and Industry superfluous or unnecessary. And this I think may be very clearly made out in the following Method.

*First*, By comparing the Nature and Extent of our Liberty, and the Powers of acting, which we find within us, with what the *Grace of God*, either is, or may be reasonably suppos'd to do for us, and with the Methods, in which it ordinarily moves and inclines the Wills of Men.

*Secondly*, By considering the very Design and Nature of *Religion* it self, which is not either to extinguish or violently to over-rule the Powers and Principles of human Nature, but to improve and assist them in their Operations.

And, *First*, by comparing the Nature and Extent of our Liberty, and the Powers of acting that we find within us, with what the *Grace of God* is, or may reasonably be suppos'd to do for us; and with the Methods in which it ordinarily moves and inclines the Wills of Men, we may come more clearly to understand the Consistence and Agreement there is between the *divine Grace*, and the Freedom



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Freedom of our own Wills and Actions, in the Matters of our Obedience. I shall consider this with respect both to the *preventing* and *assisting* Grace of God; or, as they are distinguished by the *Apostle* himself, in the Text, the *Grace of God which works in us to will*, and *that which works in us to do of his good pleasure*.

*First* then, for *preventing* Grace, and its Reconcilableness with our Liberty. Now the proper Office of this *Grace* is this, by removing the Inclinations of our corrupt Nature within us, and by due tempering and managing the Events and Accidents of Life without us, to leave a Man under a greater Readiness and Preparation to entertain his Duty, and thereby to enable him to break, or escape the force of those Temptations, that might otherwise prevail upon his Will. So that we see *preventing* Grace does not indeed work upon the Mind of Man, by a direct and effective Influence, in the way of Argument or Persuasion, it self, but only puts a Man into, and leaves him in such a Condition and Temper, wherein, if it be not his own fault, it is highly probable, the Motives to his Duty that shall be offer'd him will act upon him with their due force and weight, and not fail to bring him over to his Obedience; because by this Means of *Grace preventing* him, those Clogs and Hindrances are removed out of the way, that before oppos'd his compliance with his Duty. Thus far then this kind and degree of *Grace* does not any way interfere with, or prejudice a Man's Liberty, because it only

SERM. VII. places and leaves him in such a State of Mind, and under such Circumstances, where he may be able to use his Liberty *well*, if he pleases, and where 'tis something probable he will do so. I shall illustrate this Matter a little farther yet, by this common Instance of human Life. Suppose a Man in Bonds, and under Confinement, who, if he were set free, 'tis very probable that some Reason of his Interest or Pleasure might persuade him to go to such or such a determinate Place. In this case he that shall set this Man free by striking off his Fetters, and by opening the Prison Doors to him, does not any way overrule or determine his Liberty of going thither, whither he was before inclin'd, only, by removing the Bars and Impediments out of his way, he restores him to a Capacity of using his Liberty, as shall please him best. The very same is the case in the Matter before us; The *Grace of God* preventing us removes those Chains and Hindrances of our Sins, in which we were before intangled; and by *allaying* and *softening* the Perverseness of our Wills, and healing the Infirmities and Corruptions within us, by this Means recovers us to a sufficient Degree of *Spiritual* Strength, and Liberty, and puts us under a Capacity of using it: So that, when afterwards Arguments are urg'd upon us to our Duty, from Considerations of Reason, or Religion, they are apt to go deeper upon our Minds, and to have a more quick and vital Influence there, than while there was such a thick *Film* of *Corruption* about our Hearts, it was possible they should.

And

And as Incouragements to a Man's Obedience prove the stronger upon this account, so the force of Temptation likewise is in a great Measure broken and disarm'd, by the very same Means; because the Matter upon which such Temptations are apt to work, is by this preventing Grace of God, thrown out and evacuated. But yet after all, we see here, that this Grace of Prevention does not by any positive act oblige a Man to his Duty, it only renders him more fit for it, nor does it necessarily restrain him from Sin, it only removes from him the Temptations and Occasions of it. And thus *only* restoring a Man to his Liberty, and from the Incumbrances that lay upon him before, it leaves him entirely free and indifferent as to the Use and Exercise of it in his Practice.

The *Grace of Baptism* and *Regeneration* is the highest Degree and Measure of this preventing Grace, and yet that is so far from thwarting or justling a Man's Liberty, that, as I have already shewn, it is the very *radical* and *fundamental* Cause of it, since the Fall of Man. A Man is not free, till he is *regenerated*, till the decays and ruins of his laps'd Nature are recover'd, and some Portions of his Original Strength are reinspir'd into him. So that 'tis plain, that by the *Grace of Baptism* a Man's Liberty is only restor'd to him, but not influenc'd, or determin'd for him: And brings him to no other Condition, as to the Nature of it, though less perfect as to the Degree, than *Adam* himself was possess'd of in *Paradise*, who by the Law of his Nature had the same *kind* of Liberty, which we



SERM. VIII. have now by Grace: but yet as to the *use* of this *Liberty*, was left perfectly at his own Discretion, otherwise he could not have given sufficient Proof of his Obedience. And, as he was, so are we all, upon this Reparation of our decay'd Nature, by the Grace of God preventing us, once more left at our own *Liberty*, and put into the *Hands* of our own *Counsel*. But, though there lies a stronger *Moral* Obligation from hence upon us, to use this our *Liberty* aright, because we are by the *Grace* of God so well enabled to do so; yet are not our Wills sway'd by any *external* *Physical* Influence upon either hand, and, for ought that yet appears to the contrary, the Determination of our *Liberty* is purely the result of our own Choice and Election.

I am now to consider, in the *second* Place, the *Grace* of God *assisting* us, and whether that be as well consistent with our *Liberty* as the *Former*. By the *Assisting* Grace of God is to be understood that Influence of the *Holy Spirit* upon the Minds of Men, whereby a Man's Duty is set before him in such a present and actual Light, and inforc'd upon his Mind with such Convictions of the Moment and Consequence of it, to his Happiness, that it moves and inclines his Will towards an Acceptance of and a Compliance with it. By what secret and invisible Methods indeed, the Spirit and Power of God works these things upon the Souls of Men, whether by *immediate Impressions* on the Spirit, or whether by the Ministry and Mediation of any bodily Powers, is not so necessary here to be determin'd. However that be, we find that  
ordinarily

ordinarily the *Grace* of God prevails upon Men, in the way and course of rational Motives, and by the silent and easie Methods of Persuasion: By making a Man's Duty appear not only reasonable but amiable to him; by furnishing and recommending it with a present Pleasure, and consigning to it an *exceeding weight of futura Glory* and Happiness in another World. And in the same Measure and Proportion that this is done, so is that *Grace* it self more or less effectual, if the Mind be equally prepar'd to attend to it. So that when upon these Conditions, and by the Assistance of this *Grace*, a Man chuses and prefers Good to Evil, he does it *freely*, and from a Principle of his own Liberty: Which can no way be suppos'd to suffer Violence, when a Man acts thus upon his own Election, and in consequence of the Principles of his Nature. If it may then appear, that a Man acts at all with freedom in the Affairs of common Life, if he is not determin'd by any Necessity when he chuses a Temporal Interest before a Temporal Evil, or a greater Good in Comparison with a less, which is the same thing; if he be free in these Instances, what Reason is there to suppose him *less* so, when he proceeds upon the same reasonable Grounds in the Matters of his Duty and Religion. All the difference in this Case is, that a Man's own Natural Reason is able sufficiently to discover to him the Importance of his secular Interests and Advantages, and to give them a due Weight and Turn upon his Will; whereas, through the Corruption of Human Nature, and the *Darkness* consequent upon it; it must

**SERM. VIII.** must be the *Illuminating* and the *Assisting* Grace of God, that can make him see the same in Matters of a *Spiritual* Nature, and that belong to his *Eternal* State. But, tho' this be a different *Medium* of Proposal to his Will, it makes, however, no difference in the Nature of his Election that follows upon it. So that if a Man be free, when he acts reasonably in other Matters, he is no less so, when he acts in concurrence with the *Assisting Grace* of God. And one would desire no more in this Point, than to put the Issue of a Man's Liberty, when in conjunction with the Grace of God assisting, upon the same Foot and Bottom, it stands upon, in its natural and ordinary ways of acting.

But there are two things besides, that may be consider'd, in the handling of this Subject, that we are sure are within our Power, and which will further serve to shew the Nature and Extent of our Liberty, and its Réconcilableness with the Grace of God assisting us; And they are those that follow:

As, *First*, It is undoubtedly in our Power to make use of the direct and primary Means of Grace, such as Prayer.

*Secondly*, There are some other previous Arts and Dispositions of Mind, indisputably within our Power, which are necessary to render this assisting Grace more effectual upon our Minds, such as Attention, Consideration, and cool Reflection with our selves. When I say these are within our Power, I mean upon a Supposition of *Baptismal* and *preventing* Grace, and according to the former



mer Notion of Liberty stated upon the SERM. VIII.  
ground and supposal of that Grace.

*First* then, it is in our Power to make use of Prayer, which is a Means of Grace, and necessary to the obtaining of it. For Prayer is nothing but an affectionate Desire of some good thing from the Hands of God, directed by way of Petition to him; and to desire a good thing is the first degree of Motion of our Wills towards it; and the first and early beginnings of our Motion towards Goodness, as Prayer it self is, must be supposed, as I have already shown, to be possible in the mere Strength and Vertue of God's preventing Grace, which every Person that is Baptiz'd is sufficiently endued and furnish'd with.

And then again, *Secondly*, there are some other previous Dispositions of Mind within our Power which are necessary to render the Grace of God more effectual upon our Minds, such as Attention, serious Consideration, and the preserving our selves in a Temper fit for cool and sober Reflections. 'Tis certainly in a Man's Power to consider the Arguments for his Duty, and to attend to the Consequences of them: For there is nothing more immediately and more confessedly within the Arbitrary Power of the Will than the Attention of the Understanding; and therefore the Command and Government of the Will this way, some have thought to be the only Sphere and proper Exercise of its Liberty. And whilst a Man thus attends to the best of his Power, then is the proper Opportunity that the Grace  
of

# A SERMON *Preach'd*

*REMARK VIII.* of God usually takes of infirmating and pressing it self upon the Mind, and proves to have the greatest Prevalence; in the cool of the Day, when Passion is at a low Ebb, and Reason is most calm and apt for Reflection. And hence it is, that the same degree of God's Grace prevails upon the same Person, at one time more than at another, according to his present Disposition and Temper. The same Arguments, even in the same Light, prove and perswade more effectually at some Hours of a Man's Life, than at others. In as much therefore as 'tis within a Man's Liberty to order and manage his inward Temper and Disposition, so far, by the outward Rule and Exercise of himself, by *keeping under his Body*, as *St. Paul* did, and almost, by a Natural Consequence, from thence, by preserving his Mind cool and serene, and thereby more fit and qualified for the Spirit and Grace of God to work upon, therein appears one Prerogative of his Liberty, that even the Effects of *Divine Grace* it self may in a great measure be promoted or disappointed by him.

1 Cor. 9. 27.

There is another Principle yet behind, from which I propos'd to make out our Liberty, and its perfect Consistence with the Grace of God, and that is, *Secondly*, from the very Design and Nature of Religion it self, which is not either to extinguish, or violently to over-rule the Powers and Principles of Human Nature, but to improve and assist them in their Operations. Take the Nature of Man as it came first out of the Hands of God in its pure and uncorrupted State, and

there was nothing more suitable and more SERM. VII.  
 justly proportion'd to its End, than Re-  
 ligion. It is therefore said by *Adam* the  
*Words of Adam*, as if it were his very essen- Ecclef. 12. 13.  
 tial Form, and as if the very Frame and Con-  
 stitution of his Being were laid out entirely  
 for it, as well as we are sure they are con-  
 firm'd and perfected by it. If then Religion  
 carries in it such a consent and suitableness  
 in the Notions, and Practice of it, to the  
 Principles of Human Nature in general, or  
 ever it was stain'd and polluted by Sin; since  
 'tis certain, a perfect Liberty and Freedom  
 of Will was then the very *Flower and Sam-*  
*mity* of that Nature, and the ruling Princi-  
 ple in it, there could not then have been  
 any the *least* repugnance between Religion  
 and Liberty at first; but on the other side  
 an entire and universal Agreement and Con-  
 formity to each other. Now the Nature  
 of Religion is still the same, that ever it  
 was, because the *Divine* Nature, which is  
 the Rule and Measure of Religion, admits  
 of no Change or Alteration. And the Na-  
 ture of Man, though it be very much sunk  
 and declin'd from its original Perfection, is  
 not however chang'd as to its Essence, nor  
 consequently destroy'd as to those substantial  
 Acts and Principles, that flow from thence,  
 and such is the Principle of Liberty in our  
 Souls, being founded *ultimately* in the Rea-  
 son, and *formally* sealed in the Wills of Men:  
 So far then as Religion and Liberty are  
 both suitable to Nature in general, 'tis cer-  
 tain they must be consistent, because true  
 Nature is never at odds with it self, and  
 con-



SERM. VII. contains no Principles within it, that are in the least Destructive of one another. It must be granted indeed, that our Liberty is very much weaken'd and impair'd by our *Apostasy* from *God*; however, though we have lost the Perfection of it, it does not therefore cease to be *natural*, that is agreeable and requisite to the Perfection of our Being, any more than the Power of Sight leaves off to be *natural* to Mankind in general, because in some Persons it may be dimm'd and obscur'd by an outward Accident. And since Religion and Liberty are both of them so agreeable to the Perfection of our Being, we may very reasonably conclude from hence, that in whatsoever degree the *Assisting Grace* of *God* intends to *work together* with our Liberty of Will, that both these are perfectly consistent and amicable, and do indeed very much improve and forward, But never in the least destroy or hinder one another in any of their Operations.

*Now is God the Father, God the Son, &c.*

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The Grace of God shewn to be not only  
consistent with the Liberty of Man's  
Will, but the strongest Obligation to  
our own Endeavours in our Duty.

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the  
University of Oxon at St. Mary's,  
Sunday, April 11. 1703.

PHIL. II. 12, 13.

*Work out your own Salvation with  
fear and trembling; For it is God  
which worketh in you to Will and to  
do, of his good pleasure.*

**I**F a Man should take upon him to state  
the just Extent and Limits of Divine  
Grace, and pretend to define, exactly,  
the Measure and Manner of its Operati-  
on and Influence, upon the Minds of Men;  
this, perhaps, might be thought too curious,  
or too bold and dangerous a Design. An  
Enquiry of this nature, from the Ill Success  
it

SERM. IX.



it has met with before, and the Disturbance it has sometimes given to the publick Peace, and the private Consciences of Men, has been look'd upon not so very safe as to admit of a Debate, and as too intricate to receive a Resolution. However this be, yet surely, so far to consider the *Grace of God*, as to clear up, and maintain its Consistence with our Liberty, as we are made of a Reasonable Nature, and capable of determining our selves upon a Principle of our own Election; and to ground upon the Concurrence and Co-operation of this Grace, the Necessity and Obligation to our own diligent Endeavours in our Duty; This can never be thought an Attempt either vain or useless in its Nature, or any way mischievous in its Consequences. So far from it, that 'tis a Matter, of no less than the greatest Concern and Moment to us, and of a very near and necessary Importance to our Obedience, that we be rightly inform'd of the Proportion there is between our Strength and our Work, between our Ability and our Duty, in what Measures we are to expect Assistance from God, and by what we are to proceed our selves. So as that we may neither, on the one hand, vacade the Design and Intention of *God's Grace*, by an idle Recumbency on it, nor disparage the Necessity of it, on the other, by a vain Presumption and Confidence in our own Strength and Power. Besides, a right Apprehension in this Matter will in a great measure give ease to our Minds, and take off a silent Objection that is apt to rise within our Breasts, as often



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as we find the whole Business of our *Salvation* assign'd in the *Holy Scriptures* to either of these Principles, separately, whether the *Grace of God*, or our own diligent Endeavours. Men that are Ignorant and without Design, that can neither use nor understand the Terms and Distinctions of the *Schools*, yet in a Matter, that has so Vital a Connection with their Eternal Happiness, are well enough able to object the *Sense* tho' not the Language of *Scholars*, and to argue thus; That if, as the frequent Commands and Exhortations of the *Apostles and Prophets* seem to imply, the great Concern of our Salvation leans altogether upon the Application and Success of our own Industry, then there is no need to own so much dependance upon, and to have such frequent recourse to the *Grace of God assisting us*: Or if all must be ascrib'd to the Power and Energy of that Grace within us, why then we may lie still securely, our selves, and, without any Trouble of our own, suffer that *Grace* to have its free Course, and full Effect upon us.

From such secret Reasonings as these, according as the different Tempers, and Complexions of Men, whether *Sanguine* or *Sluggish*, may incline them, so we find them proceed, either to throw up all Concern for Religion, and to look upon it as an inconsistent Scheme, or else to resolve themselves, one way or other, on the wrong side of the Question; either insisting upon the wide and presumptuous Doctrine of *Pelagius*, on the one hand, or taking up with the too nar-

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row.

SERMON IX. row and confin'd Opinion of *Calvin* on the other.

Now in order to obviate both these Mistakes, a right Sense and Apprehension of the *Apostle's* Injunction and way of Reasoning, in the Words of my Text, will be of the most immediate service. Where we find, that both the *Grace of God* and our own Endeavours must strike in together, and are interwov'n and made effectual by each other; and tho' they act both in Conjunction, yet they preserve their Influence separate and distinct, without Confusion, and unite and joyn their Activity, without interfering. *Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you to will and to do, of his good pleasure.*

In a former Discourse upon these Words, and in this Place, I propos'd to consider four things, as either plainly expressed, or directly imply'd in them.

First, That the Reasonableness of the *Apostle's* Charge to *work out our own Salvation*, supposes a Liberty in our Wills, and a Possibility of our own Endeavours in the Business of our Duty. I went on therefore to shew that we have such a Principle of Liberty within us, and how, since the Original Fall of Man, we came by it.

Secondly, I made it my Business to prove, that this freedom of our Wills, and careful Exercise of our own Endeavours, are very well consistent, and reconcileable with the *Grace of God* co-operating with us, and that our own Industry and the Divine Grace do not in the least infringe, but mutually require

require and assist each other, and that this is more than a just Inference and Collection from the Words of the *Apostle*, who bids us *work out our own Salvation*, and at the same time tells us, that it is *God which worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure*.

My Design was, *Thirdly*, to infer the *Necessity*, and to enforce the *Obligation* to our own Care and Diligence in our Duty, even from this very Principle, *because the Grace of God works in and with us*, and enables us to *will and do our Duty*: And this, according to the *Apostle's* own way of arguing in the *Text*, *Work out your own Salvation, for 'tis God which worketh in you*.

*Fourthly*, and *Lastly*, I propos'd to consider the just Importance of those high Expressions of *Fear and Trembling*, under which we are here commanded by the *Apostle* to work out our own Salvation, and to justify the strictness of the Charge, which he delivers to us upon this matter.

And having endeavour'd to account in some measure for the two former Parts of my Proposal, which I need not here repeat, I shall now in pursuance of this Subject proceed in the

*Third Place*, To infer the *Necessity*, and to enforce the *Obligation* to our Care and Diligence in our Duty, even from this very Principle, *because the Grace of God works in and with us*, and enables us to *will and do our Duty*. And this according to the *Apostle's* own way of arguing in the *Text*, *Work out your*



*your own Salvation, for it is God which work-  
eth in you.*

Now this Necessity or Obligation to our own best Endeavours, because the Grace of God works together with us, may be clearly establish'd upon these three Reasons.

*First*, Because 'tis by the Concurrence of *Divine Grace*, that our own Endeavours, as to our Duty, are render'd more *effectual*, and, consequently, our Obedience is become more highly *reasonable*; in that God, by the assistance of his *Holy Spirit*, has taken off the Impossibility, and mightily abated the Difficulty of our Duty, and therefore our Neglect and Disobedience are left without Excuse.

*Secondly*, 'Twas the very Original Design and End of *God's Grace* to put us upon, and to promote our own Industry, so that, upon our Non-compliance with it, our Guilt is inflam'd, and we are accountable, not only for the neglect and violation of our Duty, but for the greater Sin of defeating and disappointing the *Grace of God* himself.

*Thirdly*, The continued Supplies of, and necessary Improvements in the *Divine Grace* are suspended upon our own Care and Diligence, and are liable to be withdrawn wholly from us, upon our Default and Misbehaviour.

Now by laying all these Arguments together, in their full and united Force, may be inferr'd the strongest Bond upon us, and Obligation to our own Care and Diligence in our Duty, on the account of God's co-operating Grace, that can ordinarily be laid upon

upon the Nature of Man to any thing. From *SERM. IX.*  
 the *First* of which as our Endeavours are be-  
 come more effectual and reasonable, so our  
 Neglect will appear more highly inexcusa-  
 ble; From the *Second* in a greater degree  
*Criminal*, and from the *Last* to be infinitely  
*Dangerous*.

And, *First*, Because it is by the Concur-  
 ence of the *Grace of God*, that our own  
 Endeavours are made more *effectual*, they are  
 consequently become more highly *reasona-  
 ble*, and upon that account we are under the  
 stronger Obligation to exert them. For  
 though we are not always to measure the  
 Strength of an Obligation to our Duty from  
 the Reasonableness of the Matter it self en-  
 joynd, that being founded indeed, and re-  
 lying upon the Authority of the *Legislator*,  
 and his right of Superiority over us, yet  
 when there come in these accidental Ad-  
 vantages to the Observation of a Precept,  
 that 'tis *easy* and *delightful*, and for our *In-  
 terest* to obey it, though, strictly speaking,  
 this does not heighten the Obligation of  
 the *Law*, yet it may in Reason and Equity  
 demand a more ready and chearful Com-  
 pliance from the Subject; and does justly  
 conclude him under a severer Condemnation  
 upon his Non-performance. Not, that I say  
 the Authority of a Lawgiver, when he  
 commands a thing difficult and grievous to  
 be born, is indeed ever the less on that ac-  
 count, but that when he requires a thing  
 much for our Interest and Happiness, the  
 Reasons of our Obedience are the *more* ;  
 and all these will be taken into the Ac-  
 count,

SERM. IX. count, where there comes a Judgment to be pass'd upon our Actions.

God himself we find proceeds by these Measures, in his Judiciary Appeals to that ungrateful People of the Jews, enhancing the Guilt of their Disobedience, and upbraiding them with it, from the easiness and advantageousness of the Laws that he had given them. Thus he expostulates with that People by his Prophet, *I have not caus'd thee to serve with an Offering, or wearied thee with Incense*; that is, he had laid no intolerable, no very difficult Services upon them, none but what a willing and obedient Mind would have thought possible and easie; And from hence follows the greatness and aggravation of their Sin, *but thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities*. And it was but the Sense of Natural Reason what the Servant of peevish Naaman suggested to him, when he was offended at the uncourteous Behaviour of the Prophet. *My Father, says he, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather then when he saith to thee, wash and be clean?* That is, the Easiness of the Injunction, and the Advantages that would follow upon it, should in Reason oblige him to a more civil and ready Compliance.

The tendency of this previous Discourse to my present Design, and to the strengthening of my first Proposition, appears in this, that from hence we see what sort and what degree of Obligation arises from the Reasonableness of our Duty, and therefore I shall now



now shew more expressly, that since our own Endeavours in Religion are become more effectual, and upon that Account more reasonable by the Concurrence of *Divine Grace*, we are by Consequence the more firmly oblig'd to exercise them.

Now the *Reasonableness* of a Duty, in the Sense I at present use that Word, is founded upon two things; *First* the *Comparative Possibility* of in other Terms the greater Easiness of it, and then the higher Encouragements of Success and Advantage that are proposed to the Observance of it. On both these Accounts has the *Grace of God* confirm'd and enlarg'd the Obligation to our own Industry and Endeavours, if what is reasonable can oblige us, notwithstanding that *Grace* it self does so much for us; or rather for this very Reason *because* it does so. For the *Grace of God* renders our own Endeavours effectual these *Two* Ways.

*First*, As to the Acts of our Obedience themselves, by enabling us to perform them with greater Ease, and by furnishing them with that internal Perfection which is necessary to their Nature.

*Secondly*, As to the Acceptation of them with *Almighty God*, by securing the great Design and End of all our Obedience, which is to please *God*, and by making them available to our Happiness and *Salvation*.

And, *First*, By enabling us to perform the Acts of our Obedience with Ease, and by furnishing them with that internal Perfection which is necessary to their Nature, the *Divine Grace* has render'd them more highly rea-

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Tonable, and given one of the greatest Encouragements in the World to the Exercise of them. For whatsoever the *Authority* of the *Law*, which is the Rule of our Duty and Obedience, may be supposed to be, and upon what severe *Sanctions* soever it may be established, yet if Men were under an Apprehension either of the Impossibility, or extream Difficulty of living in Conformity to it, this would necessarily *break* the *Heart*, and slacken all the *Sinews* of their Resolution. For 'tis the Will of Man that gives the Spring and Activity to his Obedience; and there is nothing lays so great a Check and Damp upon the forwardness of the Will to any thing, as the Suspicion of a very great Difficulty in it; upon which there comes on a *Chill* upon the Appetite, and then all the active Powers of the Soul shrink and languish together; so that whatever removes the Difficulty, does in the same Proportion elicit the Will, and call forth and actuate the Endeavours. And this in the Business of our religious Obedience the *Grace of God* does for us; not indeed, by any Change either in the Nature or the Obligation of the Law, which is the Rule of our Obedience, but by inspiring and invigorating the Soul with new Measures of Life and Resolution to fulfil it; by this Means taking away the Disproportion there was before betwixt a Man's Duty and his Power, betwixt the Weight, and the Arm that was to sway it. And by this Means a Man's Obedience is as properly said to be made easie to him, as it could have been, supposing the Degree or Matter of it had been alter'd, and his Power

and

and Abilities had remain'd the same. For *SER M. IX.*  
*Easiness* and *Difficulty* are relative Terms, and  
 have an equal Regard to the Strength of the  
 Undertaker, which they have to the Nature  
 of the thing it self, in which he is engag'd;  
 That being easie and practicable to a greater  
 Degree of Strength, which had been extream-  
 ly difficult if at all possible to a less; Upon  
 this account therefore the *Grace of God* has  
 render'd our Endeavours more effectual, and  
 from thence more *Obligatory*, because it has  
 made our Obedience more possible and easie.

But then further yet, 'tis the *Grace of God*,  
 which has provided, that we should not on-  
 ly be the better able to perform any part of  
 our Duty as to the Matter and Substance of  
 it, but that we should be qualify'd to do it  
 in such a manner and under such a condition  
 of Mind as we ought, and thereby has fur-  
 nish'd the outward Acts of our Obedience  
 with that internal Perfection which is neces-  
 sary to the Nature of them. And this we  
 may easily perceive is a very distinct Conside-  
 ration from the former; For 'tis possible that  
 two Men may pay an Act of Obedience to  
 the same Law, the external Performance of  
 which may be equally easie to both, and ap-  
 pear to have no Difference; and yet the *Mo-  
 ral Nature* of the Action, in one, may be  
 widely distant from what 'tis in the *other*, and  
 have far greater or less Degrees of Excellen-  
 cy in it, according as it was acted with a more  
 or less deliberate and free Consent of the Will,  
 with a greater or less Uprightness of Intenti-  
 on; or according to several other Circumstan-  
 ces, which form and distinguish the free and  
 volun-



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voluntary Actions of Men from one another, at the same time that they agree in the same common Matter, and Manner of outward Operation.

And herein lies the happy Advantage, on which the *Christian* stands, and is distinguish'd from those that are without the *Covenant* and *Privileges* of *Divine Grace*; who are furnish'd with no other Principles of Obedience, nor any other Assistances, than what the mere Law of Nature can supply them with. So that whatever Conformity there may be in the outward Actions both of *Christians* and *Others*, yet as these Actions do not take their Rise from the same Spring and Principles, so neither are they carried on with the same Advantages, nor do they terminate in the same Perfection. For the Obedience of a mere *natural unregenerate* Man arises necessarily from a wrong Principle, because the very Nature of his Condition supposes him ignorant of the only true ones. And he wants a vital Influence to direct and give him a Spirit in the Prosecution, and consequently his most perfect and entire Services must prove lame and insufficient.

And what a deadless and heartless thing must it needs appear in a matter of such infinite Consequence as we must all apprehend Religion to be, in a Business that requires the whole stress of our Souls, and should give so full an Employ to all the Powers within our Nature, in a Work of such unspeakable Importance as this, for a Man to be irresolute and undetermin'd, upon what Reason and Motive he is to begin his Obedience, and where it

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it will bring him at last; whether he moves SERM. IX.  
right in his Progress, and what are the Issues  
after all he may expect! 'Tis like a Man's  
summoning and collecting all his Strength to  
pour it out upon the Wind, when the best  
and utmost Services, he is able to perform  
with all the Zeal and straining of his Heart,  
must determine in Vanity and Dissatisfaction.  
And no Man ever yet, *without the Grace of*  
*God assisting* and enlightning him could be  
sure it would not prove so with him. For,  
considering the Weakness of our natural Pow-  
ers, how little good we are able to produce  
in our own mere Strength and Virtue, and  
how clogg'd with Infirmities that little is;  
how imperfect the Consent of the Will is to  
it, and how the Affections *start aside* from it  
like a *broken bow*, which every unregenerate  
Man must be sadly conscious of within his own  
Breast, how maim'd and disorder'd must the  
best of all our *Moral Actions* appear, when  
they are thus void of a Principle of *Divine*  
*Grace*, to form and shape them! And how  
must this necessarily damp and discourage the  
Vigour of a Man's Obedience, when in every  
Duty of Religion he performs, he must dis-  
cover such Features of Deformity in it, as  
must make him quite displeas'd with himself,  
and incline him to distrust the Favour and Ac-  
ception of the *Deity* whom he desires to a-  
dore.

But now, by the *Grace of God* inspiring us  
and promoting our Endeavours, these Dis-  
couragements are remov'd, and our Obedi-  
ence goes on cheerfully and freely, being well  
resolv'd, that it proceeds upon a true Ground  
and

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and Foundation, in that we are assisted with a greater Strength, and conducted by a wiser Conduct than our own, towards an *expected End*. And thus a sincere and good Man comes to *be satisfy'd from himself*, he perceives a quick and lively Relish from the Acts of his Obedience and Duty; and from those secret Pleasures, that spring up within him, upon his Reflections on his own Life and Conduct, he knows that he does well, and the Clearness of his own Perception that he does so, is a Security to himself, that he is not deceiv'd; because the *Grace of God* not only strengthens, but *enlightens* him, and discovers to him the *Beauty of that Holiness*, and heav'nly Disposition, which it self has wrought upon his Heart. So that howsoever it be the Condition and Consequence of his present State, that some little Stains and Sullies will always accompany his Obedience here below, yet they do not so far cloud and overcast his Mind, but that *Light* enough still continues to *break out upon his Heart*, to convince him, that he is pursuing the direct Methods to his Happiness, and to encourage him to go on

*Psalm. 84. 7. from Strength to Strength*, from one Degree of Grace to another, 'till the Acts of his Obedience improve by degrees and ripen into Perfection; 'till the Bent of his Will becomes entirely fix'd, and determin'd upon his Duty, and his Affections are hallowed and drawn over to a perfect Compliance with it. And thus the Man comes at last to live and move under the truest and most entire State of Liberty; he *does nothing*, but what he *allows*; and he does it in the most perfect Manner

this



this State of Infirmary will admit of, with the fullest Resolution, and with the greatest Chearfulness, and Vigour of Prosecution. And because the Concurrence of God's Grace thus far improves and perfects a Man's Endeavours, taking off the Clogs from his Will, removing the Hindrances, and supplying the Defects of a corrupted Nature, on this Account it gives the greatest Encouragement to his own Diligence, and enforces the Obligation to employ it.

As it does, *Secondly*, by securing the great Design and End of all our religious Endeavours, which is to please God, and by making them available to our Happiness and Salvation. And this certainly ought to be one of the strongest Encouragements to our Industry, when we reflect, that a Man is now no longer left under a trembling Uncertainty, about the Success and Issue of his own Actions, but may clearly and plainly discern the Tendency of them to his final Good.

It must have prov'd, even in the most forward Tempers of any of us, a great Abatement of our Vigour and Resolution in our Duty, when, after all the Pains we were put to in struggling against the Inclinations of a deprav'd Nature, and the hard Necessity of subduing them, we should have been left still liable to this suspicious and misgiving Reflection, that all might prove to little Purpose at last, and be quite insignificant to our final Happiness. What Man is there amongst us of such a strong Complexion and Firmness of Soul, that, under such a disadvantageous Apprehension as this, could find in his

SERMON XI. *his Heart to bear up against so great Difficulty, as he must expect to meet with in the course of his Obedience, and not be tempted rather to remit his Endeavours, to fold his Arms about him, and swim down with the Stream of his Inclinations?*

And this should make us a little tender, how we condemn the Condition of those that are, or have been left without *the Covenant of Grace*, when we consider, how dim their Prospect was, and how slender the Encouragements that were laid before them: They hoped well from the *Deity* indeed, and had kind Opinions of his Goodness and Mercy, but they found their own Obedience so defective, perform'd with such Reluctance, and cloath'd about with so much Corruption, that they could not tell, whether the Piety of it would be *accepted*, because the Infirmities of it were so *many*. But now, *we* are under the Dispensation of *Grace*, which co-operates with us, and enlivens our Endeavours, and gives them a value in the sight of *God*, and inspires us with a Confidence that they are accepted. For *God* will not now despise our Obedience because it is his own work, but will go on to bless and favour it and reward it. He will *strengthen and confirm whatever good work he has wrought in us, and will accomplish and perform it until the day of Christ*: Lord *thou wilt ordain peace for us*, says the Holy Prophet, *for thou also hast wrought all our works in us*. So that the *Grace of God*, whilst it thus interests and mingles it self with our diligent Endeavours, in the Business of our Duty, does thereby consecrate the

1 Cor. 1. 8.

Phil. 1. 6.

Isai. 26. 12.

the whole, and consign it over to the Acceptance and Approbation of *Almighty God*; And by consequence it entitles it to a Reward infinitely glorious; than which what greater Encouragement can be given us?

The Relaxations, that were made by the Gospel of our Saviour to the Rigour of the Moral Law, and its dispensing with and accepting a *sincere* Obedience, in the room of an exact and *perfect* one, prov'd one of the main things that secur'd the Authority of that Law, and reconcil'd and encourag'd Men to the Observance of it; Whereas if it had still continued to have requir'd a perfect Conformity, as a Covenant of Life and Death, and nothing less would have been accepted than a strict and rigorous Obedience, this must have been the Consequence, that when Men had once found it impossible for them to keep the whole Law, in this Sense, they would have grown desperate, and so have flung off all Regard and Reverence for it. Therefore St. Paul's Conclusion of his Argument is most highly rational to this purpose, *Do we then make void the Law* Rom. 3. 31. *through Faith?* that is by the Gospel Dispensation; *God forbid, yea we establish the Law*; that is, we procure and maintain a Respect and Reverence to it by the Doctrine of the Gospel, because we assure Men, that what Obedience they are able to perform to the Law shall be accepted. And as this was an Argument for Obedience in general then, so is the Acceptance of our own Endeavours now, of what we are able to do, in the matter of our Duty, a sufficient Reason to establish



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blish the Necessity, and to prevail for the Use and Application of them. And because, as I have shewn, this Acceptance arises from the *Grace* of God, which helpeth us, and gives a real Worth and Perfection to those Endeavours of ours, therefore upon the Concurrence of that Grace is founded one more very powerful Obligation to our own Care and Diligence in our Duty, according to the *Apostle's* own Argument, *Work out your own Salvation; For it is God which worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.*

The *Second* general Reason from which I propos'd to infer the Obligation to our own Endeavours for that the *Divine* Grace is ready at hand to go along with us, was this; Because 'twas the Original Design and Intention of that *Grace* to promote our own Industry, to stir up and awaken our Care, and that therefore, upon our Non-compliance with it, our Guilt is inflam'd, and we are accountable, not only for the Neglect and Violation of our Duty, but for the heinous Sin of defeating and disappointing the *Grace* of God it self. The very Reason why God was pleas'd to vouchsafe the Charter of his Grace to Men was to supply the Defects, to make up and repair the Breaches of a laps'd and ruined Nature; and if so, then we can never suppose he could intend, by the Supplies of his *Grace*, to supersede our own Diligence and Care, and to overbear and extinguish the Principles of Activity within our Souls, because this would be to change our Nature, and not to support the Weakness of it, and to make *Grace*, his latter Gift, establish







bliss it self upon the utter ruins of *Reason*, which was his former. But this *God* in his Wisdom has not done, but he justly expects from Men, that so far as *Reason* is able to direct them, and to influence their Wills by the Proposals of Good, and to excite their Endeavours in the Prosecution of it, that so far we should go in our own Strength, and where we fail and he sees the Labour too much for us, there he is ready by his Grace to come in for our Encouragement and Relief. So that though the *Grace of God* be indeed the Principal, as to any degree of Worthiness or Perfection, which our Obedience carries in it, which it derives only from the Merits of his *Son*; yet in regard to the *Act* and *Endeavour* it self to do our Duty, the assisting *Grace of God* may be consider'd only as an Accessary, or Secondary Help; tho' not in the order of Time, yet in that of Nature; for as much as 'tis dispens'd to us under the Notion and Intention of a Supply; which it could not be, were there not something in us, which had fallen under a defect indeed, but not an utter *Extinction* of its *Being*.

In as much then as the *Grace of God* supplies the Failures and Weakness of our Endeavours, so far it does suppose them necessary, and must in its Operations be attended by them; otherwise we fall short of the *Glory of God*, and frustrate the Grace he affords us of its due Design and Effect upon our Souls; which is a Sin of so grievous a Nature, and so deep a Tincture, that it should make us tremble to consider that we are guilty of it.

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For this is to disappoint the Goodness of God in the highest Instance, in the Condescensions of his Mercy to Men, for their everlasting Happiness: And to reject the greatest Goodness, we know, is a Crime of the most provoking Guilt, and the severest Vengeance awaits it; because it argues a Nature deprav'd, to the last extremity, almost beyond Recovery, and not capable of being wrought upon by any Principle whatsoever, according to the severe Expostulation of St. Paul, *Despiseest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness, and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thy self wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?* For this second Reason then, because the Grace of God was intended to second and assist our own Endeavours, are we more powerfully oblig'd to employ them. As we are,

Rom. 2. 4, 5.

*Thirdly*, For that the continued Supplies of, and necessary Improvements in the Grace of God are suspended upon the Condition of our own Care and Diligence, and are liable to be with-held or remov'd from us, upon our Default and Misbehaviour; For it is not in our Power to retain the Spirit of God against his Will, nor to command those Portions of his Grace, which yet are absolutely necessary, to make us obedient, or to render us happy. For how free and unconfin'd soever the first Overtures of the Grace of God were; and tho' the most early Distributions of it even prevented our very Apprehension, and therefore could

could not be founded upon any precedent S E R M. IX.  
 Merit in us; yet, whether we shall go on to  
 entertain this heavenly Gift or not, God has  
 plac'd it within our own Power and Disposal,  
 and the *Holy Spirit* attends our Motions and  
 Behaviour, by which he is to determine his  
 Abode with, or Departure from us. Like  
 the *Dove*, in whose Representation he once  
 descended, when long neglected or affront-  
 ed, he will retire from an impure and care-  
 less Soul to a cleaner and whiter Habitati-  
 on. *Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem*, says *Jer. 6. 8,*  
 God by the Prophet, *lest my soul depart from*  
*thee, lest I make thee desolate, a land nor in-*  
*habited.* And we have God's usual way of  
 proceeding declar'd to us by our Blessed Sa-  
 viour, that he will take away the Talent from *Mat. 25. 28, 29*  
 the unprofitable servant, and give it to him  
*that hath ten talents;* and the Reason given  
 for this, *for he that hath, that is, hath made*  
 good Use of what he had, *to him shall be given;*  
*but from him that hath not, from him shall*  
*be taken even that which he seemeth to have.*

By what Degrees indeed, and by what mea-  
 sure of Mens Iniquities, God is thus pro-  
 vok'd to withdraw the Communications of  
 his Grace from them, he knows best himself,  
 who sees with what Malignity every Sin is  
 committed against him, and has set the bounds  
 to his own Patience; how long his *holy Spi-*  
*rit shall strive with Mens Corruptions,* and  
 bear with their unworthy Behaviour towards  
 him. But, if we may guess any thing in this  
 Point, we may believe, that in the same Pro-  
 portions, in which he does usually dispense his  
 Grace to Mens, which are according to measures  
 suitable to their own Industry, and the de-



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gress of their own Improvement under it, so he does accordingly remove the Aids and Influence of his *Grace and Holy Spirit*, as Men go on to neglect or to despise it.

Not that we have any warrant from Reason or Scripture to determine, that from any Person, once within the *Evangelical Covenant*, God ever so totally removes his *Grace*, as to take away his entire Right and Title to it; we cannot say it ever comes to this, till by a positive Act of *Apostacy*, Men have revers'd and cancell'd their own Title, and renounc'd all the Privileges they were admitted to in *Baptism*. But however this be, yet as to any *actual* Residence of the *Holy Spirit* within our Hearts, and the real Possession of those Graces which are necessary to produce and perfect our Obedience, these 'tis certain a Man may utterly forfeit by his own fault, and be shut up, while he continues a Member of the *visible Church*, under a high Improbability, tho' not an utter Impossibility, of his Repentance.

So far then as our own Care and faithful Endeavours to do the Will of *God* are the Conditions upon which depend the Continuation and Increase of the *Divine Grace*, so far the Necessity of them sufficiently appears; and they need not, one would think, be enforc'd upon a stronger Sanction, than the forfeiture of so infinite a Blessing, which is the Perfection of our Being and the Foundation of our Eternal Bliss. The loss of the chiefest Good ought to be consider'd by us under the Notion of a proportionable Evil; and if so, with what an awful Concern then,

then, and carefulness of Soul, should this inspire us! *Yea, with what fear! yea with what vehement desire, yea with what zeal and fervour and Resolution of Spirit!* that, by our Care and Diligence in our Duty, we Endeavour to approve our selves in the sight of God, that he may be pleas'd to come and abide with us, in the Communications of his Grace, and the Holy Spirit; lest, by our unworthy Behaviour, we displease that Divine Guest within us, and provoke him to withdraw himself from us, and all the Blessings of his Presence with him, his Grace and Comforts from our Souls. Which brings me to the

*Fourth and last thing propos'd, which is to consider the just Importance of those high Expressions of Fear and Trembling, under which we are here commanded by the Apostle to work out our own Salvation, and to justify the Strictness of the Charge he delivers to us upon this Matter.*

Now I shall consider these Words in their fullest and largest Sense, but in as little Compass as I can, and shall endeavour to explain them under a threefold Opposition.

*First then, with Fear and Trembling in Opposition to a State of Security and Presumption.*

*Secondly, in Opposition to a slow and faint Pursuit of our truest End and Happiness.*

*And Thirdly, as they import a serious frame and temper of Soul, in Opposition to a light, and roving, and a dissolute Spirit.*

*And First we are here commanded to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling,*

SERM. IX. as these Words may be understood, in *Op-  
position* to a State of Security and Presumpti-  
on. For that we ought to have a quick  
and earnest Concern about our Success in a  
work of such an infinite and eternal Conse-  
quence, as our Duty is, upon which our  
Life depends, and by which the everlasting  
State of our Souls must be once determin'd.  
A Man may very well be said to proceed  
with fear and trembling, who has a just and  
deep Sense and Conviction of the weight  
and difficulty of this work of his *Salvation*;  
and of the danger of miscarrying in it, ari-  
sing from that innumerable Variety of Tem-  
ptations within and without that tends to  
draw him from it. How can a Man give  
himself up to an incurious and sinful Ease,  
who has these Thoughts upon his Spirit! or  
suffer his Soul to slide into a State of un-  
active Security, when the Sense of his ex-  
treme danger is continually alarming his Ap-  
prehension! To presume upon our past Ac-  
quisitions, and from thence to rest our selves  
in a vain and confident Expectation of our  
Reward, argues, that we neither know our  
selves, nor consider the Nature of our Con-  
dition in this World, which is by no means  
a State of rest, but of fear, and of *war-  
fare* and of *contention* of Mind; where we  
are always liable to be taken off from our  
Guard, and to be mov'd from our firmest  
Resolutions. And from hence we find, the  
best and wisest Men have been ever ready to  
tremble at the Apprehension of the dangerous  
and slippery State of their Souls, and have  
sometimes had the Joy and Comfort of their  
present



present Obedience quite overcast, by their anxious Concern and Care about their future Perseverance. For indeed, what Reason has almost the best Man in the World to promise himself securely, that all shall be well with him at last, when his Continuance in doing Good depends upon such an infinite Coniugency, upon such a Complication of Accidents, which 'tis beyond the reach and skill of mere human Power and Prudence to control? For a Man therefore to argue from his present State of Goodness in this Life, to the certainty of his future Continuance in it, is utterly *inconsequential*, and may betray him into the worst of Errors: what infinite Reason then have we all to be concern'd and fearful, and while we *think we stand, to take heed lest we fall!*

None of us surely can pretend to higher Attainments in Piety than St. Paul had reason to do; and yet with what Modesty and Caution, with what Reserve, with what Humility and Emptiness of Spirit does he express himself about his present Perfection, and his future Expectations! *Brethren, says Phil. 3. 13. he, I count not my self to have apprehended, and again, if by any means I might attain to Phil. 3. 11. the resurrection of the dead.* So much the less confident ought we to be in our Dependences, as we come infinitely short of the Perfection of this great *Apostle.*

Secondly, I understand these Expressions of *fear and trembling*, in Opposition to a slow and faint Pursuit of *Happiness*. For fear and trembling, we know, are sometimes the Consequence of a strong and vigorous Desire, which by a necessary

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necessary Dependence, engages our Attention to the Pursuit and Attainment of that Good to which it points. And to this purpose we find Fear and strong Desire brought in together with very good Reason, by the

\* Virg. Æn. 5.

\* *Wise Poet*, in his account of some who contended for the Prize.

—————*exultantiaque baurit*  
*Corde pavor pulsans, laudumque arrepta Cupido.*

It was the present earnest importunate desire of Victory, that quicken'd the Pulse of their Blood, and made their very Hearts to tremble at the Motion of it. Now they, that thus strove for Mastery, suffer'd themselves to be so transported, and to fall under such strong Affections to attain a *Corruptible Crown*, but *we strive for an incorruptible*. How then should that infinitely exceeding, that *eternal weight of Glory* that is before us, bear down all our other little Concernments of Life, whether of Business or Pleasure, and engage all our Activity, and draw all our Contemplations and Desires towards it!

There are many things about which indeed we are at present careful, and our Thoughts are divided upon a multiplicity of Designs, that we are driving on, in *this* World; but surely there is but *one thing needful*, and all the Concernments of Time, when laid in the Balance with that, appear less than nothing and Vanity. 'Tis true the real Interests of another World appear to us under a great disadvantage at present, and our Prospect of them is intercepted, and our Desires of them mightily abated, by the thick Vail of Flesh we carry about us, and by

by their suppos'd Remove and Distance from **SERM. IX.**  
 us: So much the more does it concern us then,  
*often* to retire from the Hurry and Business  
 of the World, and *always* from the Evils and  
 Corruptions of it, and by serious and de-  
 vout Reflections to give the *Powers of the*  
*World to come* a more prevailing Influence  
 upon our Hearts; for so much the nearer we  
 approach in our Contemplations to God, who  
 is the Centre of our Bliss, so much the more  
 vigorously shall we be attracted by him.  
 Happy is the Man that knows these things  
 and does them; whose main Care and Thoughts  
 are now laid out and employ'd upon those  
 great things in this his present State, which  
 must be his Life and his Happiness for ever!

*Thirdly*, and to conclude all, Let us work  
 out our own Salvation *with fear and trem-  
 bling*, as these Words import a serious Frame  
 and Temper of Mind, in opposition to a light,  
 a roving, and a trifling Spirit; than which  
 there is no State of Soul more directly an  
 Enemy to the Life and Power of Religion.  
 For Sensual Mirth and Inconsideration drown  
 and disappoint all serious Reflections in our  
 Souls, and overwhelm the Whispers of Rea-  
 son, and the gentle Suggestions of God's  
 Holy Spirit in a *wild and clamorous dissonance.*  
*Whoredom and Wine, and new Wine take a-* **Hof. 4. 11.**  
*way the Heart*, says the Holy Prophet; that  
 is, an excess of Sensual Pleasures vitiates the  
 true Sense and Relish of the Mind, flattens  
 the Perceptions of Goodness, and heightens  
 the Rage of irregular and sinful Desires.

Not that I would be any way understood by  
 this to exclude a true Joy and Chearfulness  
 from



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Ecclef. 2. 26.

1 Thes. 5. 7, 8.

1 Pet. 4. 7.

from the Conversation of good Men. 'Tis certain they have the best Title to rejoyce; and 'tis the greatest disservice to Religion that can be, to represent it as a querulous and mopish thing; when nothing becomes the Face of it more, than the most lively, chearful and pleasant Air. And we are sure God himself dispenses Joy to good Men, as part of their Reward, and as a present Instance of his Favour, *God gives to a man that is good in his sight, Wisdom, Knowledge and Joy*: But 'tis when our rejoycing becomes excessive, either as to the manner or measure, or object of it, when it lightens and scatters our Spirits too much; so far, that we cannot easily recollect them into sober and cool Reflections, and quickly recover to an inward Frame and Temper of Devotion; 'tis then, we may know our Pleasure has been irregular, and culpable, and falls under the Censure of Religion, and is here forbidden by the *Apostle*, when he enjoins us to work out *our Salvation with fear and trembling*. A loose extravagant Mirth best became the Times of Ignorance and Darkness; they *that are drunk, are drunk in the Night*, but let us *Christians who are of the Day*, who are under clearer Informations of our Duty, and the Rewards of it, let us be *sober and watch unto Prayer*; Let us take care to preserve our Minds under a serious Disposition, and Preparation to our Duty, considering how great a Work we have upon our Hands, and how much depends upon the Success of it, even no less than our eternal Well-being, and the Salvation of our Immortal Souls.

The

*The Coming of the Holy Ghost consider'd  
as depending on our Blessed Saviour's  
Intercession, together with his Office,  
as our Comforter, and his perpetual  
Residence in the Church of Christ.*

A  
S E R M O N

*Preach'd before the  
University on Whitsunday,  
May 24. 1702.*

JOHN XIV. 16.

*And I will pray the Father, and he  
shall give you another Comforter,  
that he may abide with you for  
ever.*

**T**HESE Words were spoken by our  
Blessed Lord, with a design to re-  
move or allay the Concern his Di-  
sciples were under at their Appre-  
hension of his leaving the World.

That

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John 16. 6.

That the Reasons of their Trouble upon this Occasion were very numerous, we may well suppose, if we consider that all their Hopes, their Interests, and their Affections were entirely united and center'd in their *Blessed Master*, and supported and encourag'd only by his Presence. And that the Measures of their Grief upon this account were very high and excessive, we are plainly inform'd by *Christ* himself, at the same time that he endeavours to abate them. *Because I have said these things unto you, that is about his going from them, Sorrow hath fill'd your Heart.*

'Tis for that Reason, that he applies himself with the utmost Care and Condescension to remove the false Ground and Aggravation of their Sorrow, by letting them understand the true Reason and End of his Departure, and by informing them more thoroughly about the Nature of his Kingdom, and the Glories of it; and by many other admirable Arguments in his last Discourses to them before his Death. Such Arguments, as we are sure must have prov'd the most effectual for their Comfort, because made use of and enforc'd by the *Substantial Wisdom of God* himself, who knows all the turnings and variety of Passions in our Nature, and how to heal and rectifie every Disorder in our Minds.

Amongst the rest of these Arguments, there is one, upon which *Christ* himself appears to lay the greatest Stress, and has the most frequent recourse to; which is the Promise of sending to them the *Holy Ghost*,

as



as what he well knew would be the firmest Ground and Support of their Peace and Comfort, if he could once prevail with them to admit it. Because *this* was indeed an Argument every way proportion'd to their Case, and would be sure to meet with every Objection against his leaving them, that should arise, either from the Love of himself their Master, or their Fear and Concern about their own Interest and Welfare: In that the coming and continued Presence of this so great and Holy a Person amongst them would effectually prevent the Inconveniencies they might have Reason to fear from *his* Absence; or however, more than contravail any Loss they could possibly sustain by it. For so our Saviour himself plainly intimates, that this Change of *their* Comforter or Advocate would be to *their* Advantage as well as *his*. I tell you 'tis expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I go, I will send him. The force of which Reasoning leans evidently upon this Supposition, that they should find a greater Interest by the Residence of the Holy Ghost amongst them than from *His*.

John 16. 7.

The First Opportunity our Saviour takes to introduce this Argument, is, in the Words of my Text, where he seems at the same time to sum up and unite the whole Strength of it; and where-ever else he comes, in his following Discourses before his Death, to insist on the same Point, as he sometimes does, it seems to be only a Repetition of, and an Enlargement upon *this* his former Promise. I will pray the Father and he shall give you another

SERMON 2. *either Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.* From which Words I propose to consider these three Things.

*First*, How far, and for what Reasons the coming of the Holy Ghost was suspended upon our Saviour's Intercession for it, *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you.*

*Secondly*, What are the Parts of his Office, that this Holy Person executes, as he is here spoken of under the Notion of our Comforter, or (as the Original Word is known likewise to import) our Advocate, *he shall give you another Comforter.*

*Thirdly*, In what Sense, and after what manner both his Presence and Office are to be continued to his Church throughout all the Periods of it, to the last. *That he may abide with you for ever.*

And, *First*, I shall endeavour to shew how far, and for what Reasons the coming of the Holy Ghost was suspended upon our Saviour's Intercession.

And here it cannot be deny'd, that the Good Spirit of God gave indeed very early, and frequent Evidences of his Presence with the Holy Fathers, even before the Law was given upon Mount Sinai, and continu'd to do so all along under it, throughout the whole Dispensation of the Jewish Church; not only by mighty Signs and Wonders, that he wrought amongst them, in Pursuance of the great Design, that he was carrying on in the World, and more immediately to establish the Mission of the Prophets, and to confirm their Doctrine, but likewise in his internal and secret Operations on the Minds and Spirits

rits of Men, which have been more peculi-  
 arly his Business since, and which are in Pro-  
 priety termed his Works of *Sanctification*. For  
 indeed to what other Principle, without a  
 manifest Derogation from the *Grace of God*,  
 can we ascribe those admirable Instances of  
 a brave, and generous *Faith* and *Piety*, that  
 have been made our Examples ever since, and  
 which shone out with such a full Lustre and  
 Perfection in the Lives of the ancient *Patri-  
 archs* and *Fathers*, under, and before the  
 Law? The *Faith* and *Sincerity* of *Abraham*,  
 the *Simplicity* of *Jacob*, the *Chastity* of *Joseph*, *James* 3. 13.  
 the *Meekness* of *Wisdom* in *Moses*, the fervent  
 Zeal and Devotion of *David*, of *Samuel*, and of  
 the Prophets, and their Conformity to the  
 Will of God in every thing; these surely  
 must have proceeded from a deeper Fountain  
 than the Waters of *Siloah*, and were founded *Y. 8. 6.*  
 upon a Rock higher than that of *Horeb*. Nor  
 must we dare assert such Effects as these up-  
 on the Hearts and Lives of Men, to have had  
 any other Source and Original, than the *Spi-  
 rit* and *Grace* of God in those ancient Days,  
 lest we should seem in a manner to supercede  
 that *Holy Spirit* now, and to diminish the Ne-  
 cessity of that Grace at present. And yet  
 how can we say, this and speak in conformi-  
 ty to the Gospel of our Saviour, and to the  
 general Tenor of his Apostles Doctrine? Are  
 we not there inform'd, that the *Holy Ghost* was *John* 7. 39.  
 not yet given; because that *Jesus* was not yet  
 glorified? Which lest we should interpret of  
 the extraordinary Gifts, and miraculous Ef-  
 fects of the *Holy Ghost*, the Words of our  
*Saviour* immediately before prevent us, and  
 shew,



SERMON. X. shew, that they must be peculiarly restrain'd to the necessary, and gracious Influences of that *Holy Spirit*, as they are in order to a good Life and Practice. *He that believes on me, as the Scripture has said*, that is, by the way, as the Scripture is wont to express it self, after some such manner, [for there is no such direct Passage any where in the old Te-

Mr. Mede.

John 7. 38, 39.

*stament,] he that believes on me, out of his belly shall flow Rivers of living Water: This spake he (says the Evangelist) of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* So that by the *Holy Spirit* in this Place, must be more especially understood those inward and spiritual Communications of Life, and Peace, and Joy, which should allay and quench the Thirst of Mens Soul after Happiness, and even satiate them with Goodness, as God himself in another Place expresses it. And if these were not yet given, because that *Jesus was not yet glorified*, and if in this and other Places of the *Scripture*, Faith in Christ is made the Condition of them, and they are said to follow upon his Prayer and Intercession for his Church, whence then can we answer it, in consonance to this Doctrine, that we have seen such manifest and exuberant Fruits of this *Holy Spirit* in the Times before, and under the Mosaical Institution?

To carry the Objection yet further; Is not this made the great *Contradistinction* between Rom. 8. 15. the *Law* and *Gospel*, that the Spirit of the Gal. 43, 24. former was that of *Bondage*, that is, wherein the *Spirit of God* was indeed narrow and confined, and left Men to labour under the Obligations of the *Ritual* and *Moral Law*, almost in

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in the only Vertue of their natural Strength and Power? And do not the *Apostles* themselves complain of this, as a Burden, that had been too heavy for them and for their *Fathers*? And on the other hand, 'tis the great and distinguishing Privilege, and *Glory* of the *Evangelical* State, that 'tis a *Ministration of the Rom. 3. 8.* Spirit: It requires Duties of a spiritual Nature, directs Men to a spiritual Happiness, and amply supplies Mankind with spiritual Assurances: And yet how can this be? and how came this Distinction to be made between the *Gospel*, and the *Law*, upon the Account of those spiritual Privileges of the *Holy Ghost*, which one is suppos'd to have had, and not the other, when we have seen that they were exceeding great, if not equal under both; though not altogether so common, and publick under the one, as the other?

To this I shall return as brief, and as distinct an Answer as I can; allowing indeed that the *Holy Spirit* did very plentifully impart himself, before, and under the Times of *Moses's* Law, in the Communications of his Grace to Men; and perhaps to some extraordinary Persons, in such Degrees, and Measures as were little inferior to the *Gospel* Ages: But then *here* was the great Difference betwixt the *Law* and *Gospel*, as to this Point, that before the Law, and under it, what the *Holy Spirit* did, was purely free, and at his own Motion, without any Obligation that he had pass'd himself under, by vertue of any express Promise in any *Covenant* whatsoever; not excepting that of *Moses*. And from hence it is, that the Graces and Gifts of the *Holy*  
T *Ghost*,

SERM. X. *Ghost*, under the *Legal Constitution*, though they were indeed an Happiness exceeding great, to those that enjoy'd them; yet they cannot

*Gal. 3. 2.* be said to have been the Privilege of that *Law*, as being neither included in the Conditions of it, nor what any Man could claim in virtue of any Obedience to it. And this is the

true Reason, why the *Law* is not to take the Denomination of being a *Spiritual Constitution* from hence; because, though the Grace and Gifts of the *Holy Spirit* were exceeding great, and manifold under that *Law*, yet they did not in strict Propriety belong to it: They were neither then so regular, nor so frequent as since. The *Holy Spirit* was then, in the largest Sense, what the *Prophet David* entitles him,

*Psal. 51. 12.* *a free Spirit*; like the Wind, to which he is resembled by our *Blessed Saviour* in those early Times, *he blew where he listed, and men*

*John 3. 8.* *heard the sound of him*, but could not very well tell whence he came, whither he went, or when he would return: Whereas under the *Gospel OEconomy*, the *Spirit of God* himself is become the great and glorious Condition of the new Covenant, to which the *Blood of Christ* is the Seal; and *God* is now oblig'd, not only by the Goodness, and Benignity of a *Father*, but by the Right and Justice of a *Party covenanting* with Mankind, to give his *Holy Spirit* to them that ask him: To furnish Men with all that Strength and Assistance of his *Grace*, which may answer the Design of his *Sons* coming into the World, and the *Voice* of his *Blood*; which may be sufficient to promote Mens Piety in this Life, and secure their Happiness in the other.

So



So that in this Sense principally must we SER. M. X.  
 understand, that the *Holy Ghost* was not yet  
 given; or as 'tis in the *Greek*, *ἐπεὶ δὲ ἦν Πνεῦμα* *John 7. 39.*  
*ἔσθι*, the *Holy Ghost* was not yet; that is,  
 he was not yet the proper Right of Men, not  
 to be imparted by vertue of any divine Pro-  
 mise or Engagement, not enacted into a Co-  
 nenant, 'till *Jesus was glorified*; 'till he had  
 performed the Conditions upon which the  
 full Effects of the *New Testament* were su-  
 spended; by reconciling God to Men through  
 the Merit of his Sufferings, and then entring  
 into his *Glory* to intercede for them, and for the Luke 24. 26.  
*Mission* of the *Holy Ghost* to comfort them.  
 Which sending of the *Holy Spirit* I shall yet  
 consider more particularly, for what Reasons  
 it was thus deferr'd, and made to depend upon  
*Christ's Prayer* and Intercession.

Now by the *Intercession* of *Christ*, taken in  
 the most general and extensive Sense of it, we  
 may understand all those *mediatorial* Acts of  
 the *Son of God*, which carried in them any  
 thing of the Nature of a *Satisfaction*, where-  
 by in any Passage of his Life, he was recon-  
 ciling God to Men in himself, thus making  
 up the Breaches of human Nature; and pre-  
 paring, and opening a Way for the Favour  
 and Blessing of *Almighty God* to descend up-  
 on us: And thus every Instance of his Suf-  
 ferings, though it had not the express Voice,  
 yet it carry'd in it the Force and Efficacy of  
 a Prayer and Intercession, in that it tended to  
 render God more propitious to Men, and more  
 inclinable to shew them Mercy: But what  
 we more usually, and generally understand  
 by the *Intercession* of *Christ*, is either some de-

SERM. X. terminate Prayer, or some immediate Act of his exhibited to his *Father*, whereby he pleads in our behalf the Merits of his own Obedience, and Sufferings, and always prevails to have the Grants of Mercy deposited in his Hands for us.

In this *Sense* it was, that he *here* engages to intercede with his *Father* for the Effusion of his *Holy Spirit* upon the Church, to carry on the Work of Salvation, that himself had so happily begun, and whereof he had laid the Foundation in his own Sufferings: *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter.* Now that he did this, whilst upon Earth, we do not find from any Prayer of his left behind him, no not that most affectionate Address to *God the Father* in the 17th of *St. John*: Where yet we may see his great Design was to recommend his Church into the more immediate Care, and Protection of his *Holy Father*, to be guided in all things, and conducted by his blessed Influence and Superintendence, through all the Troubles and Hazards of this World, safe to its final State of Glory in the other. We may therefore reasonably suppose, nay, we have our Supposition highly countenanced and strengthened from the Authority of the *Scripture* it self, that this part of our *Saviour's* Intercession for the *Holy Ghost* was not to commence, but upon his Entrance in within the *Veil* into the Glory, and Presence of his *Father*. That so thereby a real and immediate Presentment of himself before God, with the Price of our Redemption in himself, in his own sacred Body, that was before offered for us, and in that Soul

*John 17.*

*John 17. 11.*

*John 16. 7.*  
*Eph. 4. 8.*

Soul that was bruised for our sakes, he might **SER. M. K.**  
 effectuate our Peace with God, and as a Re-  
 turn and Evidenced of a perfect Reconciliati-  
 on, prevail for the pouring out of that Spirit  
 of Holiness upon us from on high; without  
 whose blessed Cooperation and Influence, we  
 could neither continue that our Peace with  
 God, nor ever have a sufficient Assurance that  
 it was ever procured for us. For 'tis by the  
 Love of God, that is shed abroad in our Hearts *Rom. 5. 5.*  
 by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us; that  
 we are assur'd of our Acceptance with him.  
 He is the earnest Seal of our Inheritance, until the *Ephes. 1. 14.*  
 Time of the purchas'd Possession come. And 'tis  
 the Spirit of God that witnesses with our Spirit *Rom. 8. 16.*  
 that we are the children of God.

And thus it pleas'd Almighty God to with-  
 hold, and restrain the freer, and more abun-  
 dant Communications of the Holy Ghost, 'till  
 Christ arriv'd into the Possession of his Glory,  
 (For when he ascended up on high, he then led *Ephes. 4. 8.*  
 captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men) at  
 it may be suppos'd for these two Reasons  
 more especially.

First, Because the Mission of the Holy  
 Ghost was intended by God his Father, as an  
 Act of the highest Honour that could be  
 done to Christ himself, here below, after his  
 Ascension into Heaven.

Secondly, Because as his Merits were the  
 real and only Ground, and Foundation of so  
 infinite a Blessing to the World, so it was  
 but reasonable, it should pass to Men through  
 his Hands, and according to his more peculi-  
 ar Request and Application to God for it.



SERM. X. And, *First*, The coming of the *Holy Ghost* was intended by *God his Father*, as the highest Honour that could be done to *Christ* himself here below, after his Ascension, and therefore it was necessary it should have depended upon his Prayer and Intercession. For though *God his Father* was at all times ready to do him Honour, for that he dwelt always in the Bosom of *Divine Love*, and did ever those things that pleas'd *God*, and made it the great Design of his Life to glorify him here on Earth; yet, whether it were that the Subjection, and Distance of his human Nature requir'd it, or that he, the *first-born* of the Sons of *God*, was herein to set an Example to his Brethren, we find, that even those very Glories, that were due to him as the Rewards of his perfect Righteousness, were yet to be the immediate Returns and Answers of his Prayers. What, one would think, could be of more necessary Consequence, than the Glorification of the human Nature from its Union with the *Divine*? which, any longer than it was restrain'd by an infinite and voluntary Power, must have stream'd out upon the *other* with a full Effulgence of Glory; and yet we find, our *Saviour* made even this his Request, and the Subject of his Prayers, which was so near and necessary a Result from his Personality: *Father, glorify me--with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was.* And further; Though the very Design of his coming into the World was to establish a Church, and though 'twas the Will and Desire of *God his Father* that he should do so; and it

John 17. 5.

was

was founded upon a Compact between the **SERM. X**  
 Persons of the Blessed *Trinity*, that he should  
 be furnish'd with a full Commission, and a *Psal. 20. 7.*  
 sufficient Authority and Means in order to  
 it; yet we find that, at his publick Entrance  
 on his Office, they were his own Prayers  
 that drew down the visible Uction of the  
 Holy Ghost upon him, and were the Instru-  
 ments of his Inauguration. For when all the *Luke 3. 21, 22.*  
 people were baptiz'd, it came to pass that Jesus  
 also being baptiz'd, and praying, the heaven  
 was opened---And the Holy Ghost descended in  
 a bodily shape like a dove upon him, as St. Luke  
 gives the account of it. Again we are in-  
 form'd that before the Election of his *Apostles, Luke 6. 12, 13.*  
 he spent the whole Night in Prayer to God;  
 (as it may very reasonably be presum'd) for a  
 more solemn Benediction on him, and Success  
 in the great Design he was going upon, that  
 would be of such an infinite Consequence to  
 his Church for ever. And when this Church  
 was already founded in the College of the  
*Apostles*, and had made some further Pro-  
 gress in the World, for a Conclusion and  
 Seal to all, we have that admirable Prayer  
 of his, I mention'd before, for the future *John 17.*  
 Blessing and Protection of it: Every word  
 of it instinct with Life and Spirit, that bears  
 the Resemblance, and Character of the Eter-  
 nal Love, as well as of the infinite Wisdom  
 of the Son of God. From these several In-  
 stances it appears, that in the order of Di-  
 vine Things, though our Saviour's Honour,  
 and Glory, conferr'd upon him by God his  
 Father, were the Right, and might have  
 been the Claim of his Obedience, yet he  
 chose

**SERMON.** chose to make them, for Reasons best known to God, and himself, the Matters of his Prayer and Petition. And therefore in Correspondence to this, the Mission of the Holy Ghost, since it was to be so great and so peculiar an Honour to Christ himself, as well as his Religion upon Earth, being part of his own Personal Happiness, as well as the Privilege and Interest of his Church, was to proceed upon his more immediate Addresses to his Father for it. And that it was indeed such an Honour, as we have here supposed, our Saviour's own Words are a sufficient Evidence, *He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* For indeed the main, and most immediate end of the coming of this Blessed Person was to glorify our Saviour, in being a Vindication of his perfect Righteousness, a Conviction of his Acceptance with God, a Result, and Consequence and an Assurance to Men of his Exaltation to the Throne of God: For so indeed St. Peter makes it, *Acts 2. 33. Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shod forth this, which ye now see and hear.* And so our Lord himself explains it. *John 16. 8. And when he (that is the Holy Ghost) is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and judgment, viz. of their own Sin, and of my Righteousness, and of the Right and Power of judging the World, in which I am invested by my Father.* But then,

*Secondly, As Christ's Merits were the real and only Ground and Foundation of so infinite*



finite a Blessing to the World, so it was but **SERM. X.**  
 reasonable, it should pass to Men through  
 his Hands, and according to his more pecu-  
 liar Request, and Application to God for it:  
 That hereby it might appear to Men, how  
 great his Interest with God his Father was,  
 and to whom they must look up, and whom  
 acknowledge the Fountain, and Author of  
 their Spiritual Life and Blessing: That as  
 by his Satisfaction, Mankind had access to  
 the Father, being introduc'd to the Pardon *Rom. 5. 2.*  
 and Favour of Almighty God by him: So *Eph. 2. 18.*  
 through his prevailing Intercession might be  
 deriv'd the Holy Ghost, the Pledge and Ear- *Eph. 3. 12.*  
 nest of that Reconciliation: In as much as  
 this was of a very high Necessity, and  
 Importance both to the Honour of Christ  
 himself, and towards the producing and the  
 improvement of our Faith and Dependance  
 on him: When God would have all those  
 numerous Blessings, which attend the Com-  
 munication and Presence of his Holy Spirit, *Haggai 2. 7.*  
 pass under his Son's Disposal, and make them  
 depend upon his Prayers; thereby turning  
 the Desire and Expectation of all Nations  
 upon him, as being constituted the Supreme  
 Dispenser over the House of God. For as  
 God has made us accepted to himself only in *Eph. 1. 6.*  
 the beloved; so is he willing that all the  
 Blessings, that descend from Heaven upon us,  
 should carry a Relation to his Son, and bear the  
 signature of his Love and Power upon them.  
 It being an Honour due to Christ, as appointed  
 the great Mediator between Heaven and  
 Earth; and besides, a silent Argument, and  
 Intimation of the infinite Holiness, Purity  
 and Greatness of our God, and his distance  
 from

SERM. X. from Sinners, that he will not vouchsafe to transact *immediately* with Men, that have so far affronted his Authority; nor appear to favour them, but through him, to whom, having communicated his very Nature, he cannot deny any thing he will request for himself, or us. And then besides, to recommend the Greatness of his Gifts to Men in the Effusion of his *Holy Spirit*, he would have them to be consequent upon the Intercession of his own *Son*; that so the Richness and Worthiness of the Means of the Conveyance might give a peculiar Grace and Ornament to the Blessing it self, raising Mens Estimation of it, and rendring them more concern'd to answer the Design of it in their Lives.

And thus I have shewn at large, how far, and for what Reasons, the Mission of the *Holy Ghost* was suspended upon the Prayer, and Intercession of our *Saviour*; *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter*: And this brings me to consider,

*Secondly*, What are the Parts of his Office, that this *Holy Person* executes, as he is here spoken of under the Notion of our *Comforter*, or (as the Original Word is known likewise to import) our *Advocate*. For thus our *Saviour* seems here to promise him to his Disciples, with a peculiar Regard and Relation to them, and their Interest; *I will pray the Father, and he shall give You another Comforter*. Not but that the *Holy Ghost* was indeed always, and is still an Advocate for *Christ* himself, as having receiv'd his Commission and Instructions from him, and being employ'd

employ'd to act under him; to promote the Design, and to advance the Reputation of his Religion upon Earth. And this he did in the first Ages of the Church, by confuting and silencing the Objections of the Enemies to *Christianity*, in the powerful demonstrations of the Spirit, and Truth of it; overbearing the Prejudices, and clearing up the Darkness of Mens Minds, and bringing into Subjection every Thought and Design of theirs, *that exalted it self against the knowledge of the Son of God.* 2 Cor. 10. 5. And this he continues to do in some measure, and as far as is necessary, ever since, though in a more secret and invisible manner; inforcing upon the Hearts of Men the Arguments he once deliver'd for the Truth, and Excellency of the Christian Faith; taking down and controlling the Carnal Pride within our Nature, and subduing our Minds to an hearty Acknowledgment of, and a Belief in, and a Dependance on, an humble and crucified *Saviour*. And thus the *Holy Spirit* is our *Blessed Saviour's* Advocate, and another Mediator between *Christ* and Men, as *Christ* himself is between Men and *God*. But because my Text seems rather to direct me to speak of the *Holy Ghost* under another Intention than as an Advocate for *Christ*, I shall therefore pass off from this, and go on to consider him under a nearer Relation to our selves, as he is indeed more properly our Comforter and Advocate. Which part of his Office he makes good to us in these four following Instances.

*First*, In that he is the great Promoter, and Inciter of our Piety in general, suggesting



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*Vid. Hammond  
on Acts 15. 31.*

ing Holy Thoughts and Resolutions to our Minds, and inforcing them there with a quick and powerful Energy; and this Sense the Greek Word *Παροιστάς* will bear of an Instigator or Exhorter, and is by the best Expositors known and allowed to have in this very Place.

*Secondly*, He is our Advocate, in that he is an Assistant or Helper of our Devotions and Prayers more particularly, teaching us both how to pray, and for what, preventing, and seconding our Petitions, with his own prevailing Intercession.

*Thirdly*, He is our Comforter and Encourager under our own sad Experience of the Weakness of our Corrupt Nature, and under all the Difficulties of our Duty.

And *Fourthly*, He is also our Support and Comfort under the Troubles and Afflictions of the World.

And *First*, He is the great Promoter and Inciter of our Piety, suggesting Holy Thoughts and Resolutions to our Minds, and inforcing them there with a quick and powerful Energy. For because of the Proneness of our deprav'd Nature to the Pleasures and Diversions of a Sensual Life, and (as a Consequence from thence) an Aversion from God, and our Duty, we should hardly ever entertain any Thoughts of returning, nor without infinite Difficulty and Reluctance be kept to our Obedience, *but that he that is within us is a Principle stronger than our selves, and the World without us.* And though the Methods, by which he thus applies himself to us, and whereby he acts upon us, be secret and im-

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*John 3. 8.*

perceptible; hidden even to our own Souls SERM. X.  
upon which they move, and beyond the  
nearest and closest Scrutiny of our Thoughts;  
yet are they nevertheless real, and effective  
to the greatest and highest Purposes of Grace  
and Nature. Such indeed are the Change  
of a Man's Mind, of his Principles, and of  
his Interests; the alteration of his Sentiments,  
and the introducing a new Turn and Scheme  
in his Affections, and a perfect and entire  
Revolution of him from off a false Bias,  
and Pursuit, to that which is the true and  
last end of his very Life and Being. Such  
as these are the visible and open Effects of  
a secret and invisible Power, which is strong,  
however it be silent; and though gentle and  
easy, proves nevertheless effectual, and pre-  
vails above all power of Opposition and Con-  
troul. Such indeed is the effectual working  
of the Holy Ghost within us, as that of God  
without us, which conducts and superintends  
the Affairs of the Natural and Moral World,  
that, in all the Changes and variety of Mo-  
tions in either, has the main and over-ruling  
Sway, and carries every thing to the accom-  
plishment of its own Designs, through all  
the Difficulties that encounter it; and yet  
with that soft and silent Influence, that pas-  
ses by us, and we don't perceive it. *Verily,*  
*thou art a God that hidest thy self,* O God of *Isaiah 45. 15.*  
*Israel, the Saviour,* says the Holy Prophet.  
And Thou, O Blessed Spirit! dost all these  
things in Secret upon Man after the Council *Ephes. I. 11.*  
of thine own Will, whilst thou leavest eve-  
ry Man to follow his, neither infringing his  
Liberty, nor offering Violence to the Inclina-  
tions

SERM. X. nations over which thou yet prevailest. For all these things are done of the *Holy Spirit* upon Men, by Movements that are suitable to Human Nature in general, and agreeable to the different Tempers of Men in particular, by his striking in with the Sense and Instincts of our own Souls, and leading us to God and our Duty, from a vital and inward Conviction within us; whilst he repeats, and urges upon our Minds the mighty Arguments of Religion, darting in a new Light upon our Thoughts, and discovering to us both the Way we should go in, and the eternal and infinite Moment of those Reasons that move us to it. And thus far he is our *Paraclete* in the first Sense of the Word, as he is a Promoter, and Instigator of our Piety in general.

Secondly, He is our *Advocate*, in that he is an Assistant and Helper of our Devotions in particular, directing us both how to pray, and for what, preventing, and seconding our Petitions with his own prevailing Intercession. For we indeed know not what we should Pray

Rom. 8. 26. for as we ought, but the Spirit it self maketh Intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be utter'd.

Our Minds are light and roving, our Desires irregular, and our Ignorance is great; and all these together, concur to unhallow our Devotions, or to leave them imperfect, after our utmost Endeavours and Application. So that had we not a powerful Friend within us, that sits upon the *Altar* of our Hearts, and mercifully observes, and clears off the Stains and Sullies of the *Incense* that ascends from



from thence towards Heaven; all our Importunities would be so clogg'd and intangled with the Pollutions of Earth and Sin, that they could never reach the Presence of the God of Glory; or if they did, 'twould be to bring down his Vengeance, rather than to procure his Favour. But now we know we have an *Advocate*, whose Interest is great in the Court of Heaven, and sufficient to recommend to the utmost our lame and imperfect Services, if they are but sincere; in that 'tis the *Holy Spirit* himself who *helpeth* Rom. 8. 26, 27. *our Infirmities; and God, that searcheth the Hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh Intercession for the Saints, according to the will of God.*

He it is that, when Holy Desires begin to fail within us, when the Fire of our Love to God and our Duty, (which is one main Ground and Condition of the Acceptance of our Prayers) when this faints and languishes, he then inspires it with his Breath from Heaven, and feeds it with his Blessed *Unction* from *above*, and recovers it into a bright and vigorous Flame. When our Affections tire and sink down, because of their own natural Infirmary, or under the weight and burden of Earthly things, 'tis He that raises and supports them, that quickens, and enlivens them with a Heavenly Sprightliness Rev. 8. 3, 4. and Activity, and makes them ascend on the Wings of a devout and fervent Prayer, on the Wings of *Angels* towards Heaven. Whilst he works within us a deep Sense and Conviction of our Needs, he renders our Prayers earnest, and importunate, and sincere; whilst

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Heb. 4. 16.

whilst he represents and holds out to us the Bowels of God's Mercy in general, and his Readiness to hear and relieve us, he gives a Spirit of Faith and Confidence to our pious Addressees; and whilst from both these he actually seals to our selves in particular, a lively Security, and Assurance that we are heard and accepted of the God of Heaven, he overflows our Souls with Peace and Comfort, and makes us even anticipate the Happiness God is preparing to reward our present Piety. *Now all these things works that good and blessed Spirit for us, that so we may come boldly, and with sure effect to the Throne of Grace, that we may thence obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

Thirdly, He is also our Comforter and Encourager under our own sad Experience of the Weakness of our corrupt Nature, and under all the Difficulties of our Duty; in that, we know, he does not take the advantage of our Weakness, nor precipitate our Religion, but leads us on gently as we can bear, and requires no more of us as an indispensable Condition of our *Salvation*, than we can at that time perform: Always considering the Infirmities of our present Nature, the strength of our Temptations, and the high and absolute Perfection of his own Laws; which he leaves still for the Rule of our Duty and Obedience, though he does not insist upon an exact Conformity to them, as a Covenant of Life and Death. And where we fail, and come *short of the Glory of God*; when we are apt to be cast down in our own Thoughts upon a just sense

sense and view of our own Unworthiness, he there kindly interposes to secure us from Dejection and final Despair, and by a secret Voice behind us bids us hope, and take Courage, and *renew our Strength as an Eagle* Isaiah 30. 21. Psal. 103. 5. for a fresh Attempt upon our Duty.

Thus he bears with us all along in the tender Age of our Piety, is pleas'd to interpret our many Slips and Imperfections not as Provocations of his Anger, but as the Objects of his Pity and Compassion. Till we go on *from strength to strength*, and recover Psal. 84. 7. Rom. 8. 21. into the *liberty of the Sons of God*; into a Liberty from Sin and Death; a Liberty of doing God's Will, and what is best for our selves, and most agreeable to the Dictates of our reasonable Nature; a Liberty under which we are deliver'd from the Slavery of our vile Lusts and Passions; that so miserably hamper and entangle us; and are plac'd under his own immediate Direction, and Influence, that is always guiding us to our true Happiness, *whose Law giveth life, and whose service is perfect freedom*. For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty, says 2 Cor. 3. 17. the Apostle, and thus may we chearfully run Psal. 119. 32. the way of God's Commandments, when, by the Inhabitation, and Grace and Comforts of his Holy Spirit, he has set our Hearts at liberty.

Fourthly, and Lastly, He is likewise our Support and Comfort under the sorest Troubles and Afflictions of *this* World; chiefly by opening to our Minds that Blessed State of things, that awaits us in *another*; and, in the midst of all the present Clouds and

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SER. M. X.

*Psal. 45. 7.*

*Psal. 31. 8.*

*Ezek. 2. 10.*

*Isaiah 48. 10. Furnace of its affliction.*

Darkness round about us, impressing bright and joyous Expectations upon our Spirits, and conveying in the *Oily* gladness, and distilling it upon the Minds of Men, through those secret, and hidden Conduits and Channels, that are known only to himself. For as he perfectly understands the Frame of Human Nature, and knows exactly the Make and Temper of the Souls of every one of us, so can he reach and pierce through to our Spirits, at all those *Avenues* and Inlets of Pain, and Pleasure, that himself has made. He knows how to proportion a Remedy to the most retired, and complicated Diseases of our Nature, and however we are intangled, and taken in the *Snare* of our own Passions, he can let us go free, and bring out our *Feet into a large Room*. Whilst he lays an Arrest upon the violent Motions, and Confusion of our Thoughts, and with-holds our *Imagination* from pursuing its own Misery, beyond the Bounds of Religion, and Reason: Which unruly Faculty within us, were it once permitted to run loose, it is beyond Conception, what infinite Terrors and Affrightments it must create, and how 'twould fill our whole Lives with *lamentation, and mourning, and woe*. But this, in good Men that have a Title to the Comforts of the *Holy Spirit*, is under the blissful Direction, and Restraints of that *Good Spirit*, and shall always have a fit Proportion of Light, and Gladness, and Refreshment, to temper the black Ideas of Misery and Sorrow, and to fan and recreate the Soul in the

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Were there indeed no other Joy, no other *ER. M. 2*  
*Consolations* of the *Holy Spirit*, as there are *Phil. 2. 1. 2.*  
 many, (and this truly sincere and pious Men  
 understand very well there are, and rejoice  
 and triumph daily in the Experience, and  
 Relish of them;) but if there were none  
 else; yet how can it be, but that the bare,  
 and only Belief and Expectation of a World  
 to come, where there shall be such a per-  
 fect, and final Deliverance from all the Pains  
 and Troubles that we meet with here be-  
 low, such a full Imbatement in Bliss, in the  
 Possession, and Enjoyment of the *Supream*  
*Good*; how, I say, can it otherwise be, but  
 that this one Reflection, when set home up-  
 on our Thoughts, by the Power and Acti-  
 vity of the *Holy Ghost* within us, must be  
 abundantly sufficient to lighten the severest  
 Burden of our Lives, to make us raise our *Heb. 12. 12, 13.*  
*heads*, to lift up the hands that hang down,  
 and to strengthen the feeble knees, and to sup-  
 port all that is weak and insufficient in our  
 Souls, that it be not turned out of the way!  
 For by the Mediation of *Faith*, the *good*  
*Spirit of God* that dwells in our Hearts, makes  
 all the Glories of another World pass before  
 our Eyes, whilst it draws back the Veil of  
 the Heavenly Tabernacle, and reveals all the  
 interior and hidden Beauties of God's Presence,  
 of the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, and of the Saints  
 in Light; to whose blessed assembly and com-  
 munion we our selves are come, and are now  
 reckoned Denizens of that Holy City, have  
 our present conversation in heaven, and shall  
 shortly enter on the Possession of the Glory  
 there prepared and ready for us. So that

Colos. 1. 12.

Heb. 12. 23.

Phil. 3. 20.

John. 14. 2.

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\* *λογισμους*

28.

Rom. 8. 18.

upon a fair and just stating the Account, we may very well \* *reason* with the *Apostle*, *that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compar'd with the glory, which shall be revealed in us.*

And such Thoughts and Reflections as these will in some measure bring down Heaven to us upon Earth, and give us a quick and lively Taste of those exceeding Joys to which we are going. For indeed this is a Property of *Faith*, to represent our future Glory, not only as real, but in some measure as present and actual; and this will be abundantly enough to set us far above the World, and all it can offer to tempt us with; above all the Pleasures and Allurements, above all the Sufferings and Evils of it; in that we know, and are perswaded with the *Apostle*, *that the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen (unless by the Eye of Faith alone) are eternal.*

2 Cor. 4. 18.

I come now to the *Third* and last thing proposed, which was to shew in what sense, and after what manner, both the Presence, and Office of the *Holy Ghost*, are to be continued to his Church throughout all the Periods of it, to the last; according to these Words of our *Saviour*; in the Text, — *that he may abide with you for ever.* I am oblig'd to be very short upon this Point, and shall therefore only sum up what might be spoken more largely on it, and shall so conclude.

In the *First* Place then, 'tis certain that the *Holy Spirit* has withdrawn the Miraculous, and open Effects of his Power from the



the Church of Christ, because when his Religion was once establish'd in the World, and grown to some Pitch of Strength and Maturity, these things were no longer necessary; being design'd only at first for the Infancy of Christianity, for *Signs and Wonders* Isaiah 8. 18. John 4. 48. to the People, in order to draw their Attention, and to engage the Curiosity of Men, to look into that Religion which came recommended with such Power and Authority from on high. But when these Effects were once secur'd, and Religion had taken a deeper Root in the Earth, then God left it to be supported, and propagated by more Human Methods, by the Industry and Example of its Professors, and by the Purity and Excellency of its own Doctrine; and in this case, we may speak of Miracles in general, what St. Paul pronounces of the Gift of Tongues in particular, that they were intended for *signs not to them that believe, but to them that believed not*: And therefore they were of Consequence to cease and be done away, when the full End and Design of them was once accomplish'd. 1 Cor. 14. 22.

But then, *Secondly*, Though the Spirit of God has remov'd the visible and external Instances of a Miraculous Power out of the Christian Church, yet has he not left it destitute of any Gifts, or Graces, that might be necessary for the due Government and Administration of it; in that he still continues himself, to *rule in the congregation of the Saints*, to apply his Commission and Power to his Ministry upon Earth; whom, by secret, and invisible Methods, by inward In-

SERMON. X. *stinks, and Propensities, and by over-ruling external Events, he draws and allures to the sacred Function, and separates them as his own Lot and Peculiar for the Work to which he has appointed them; furnishing them with all Assistances necessary, to carry on his great Designs upon the Soul of Men, prospering their Endeavours, ratifying and confirming their Acts, and protecting their Persons, and their Interests, against the malicious Plots, and Contrivances of ill-designing, and irreligious Men.*

*Thirdly, and to conclude all; As the Divine Power of the Holy Ghost has already given us, and will ever continue to provide all things necessary to the outward Polity, and Government of his Church on Earth, so more especially all those things, that pertain to a spiritual Life and Godliness, towards the promoting the inward Piety, and true Temper of Christ's Religion in Mens Souls: Nor will the Spirit of God ever confine, and straiten himself in the Communication of those Graces, and that Unction from above, that shall be requisite to teach Men, and lead them to a Knowledge of their Duty, or enable them to the Practice of it: In this Respect his ear shall not be heavy, that it will not bear, nor his hand ever shortned that it cannot redeem; redeem us from the Power and Dominion of our Sins, and hear our earnest Prayers to the Throne of Grace, for Mercy and Assistance, to fulfil our Obedience, and to do thy Will, O God! that we may enjoy thy Favour:*

*Acts 13. 2.*

*1 Pet. 1. 3.*

*1 John 2. 20.*

*Isa. 59. 1.*

*Psal. 40. 8.*

To





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*Of Grieving the Holy Spirit.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

University on *Whitsun-Tuesday*,

*May 25. 1708.*

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EPHES. IV. 30.

*And grieve not the holy Spirit of God,  
whereby ye are sealed to the day of  
redemption.*

**T**HERE can be no Point of greater Necessity, when we once come to have right Apprehensions of the Nature of the *Holy Ghost*, and are duly convinc'd of his Mission, and Operations in the Church of *Christ*, than to consider with what Temper of our Souls we must go on to entertain his divine Presence, so as not either to drive him from us, or disappoint his sacred Residence with us of the gracious Ends to which it was design'd. For all the great

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great things which we either believe or can speak concerning him are refer'd to our Practice as their proper End, and 'tis there they must all terminate, as in their full and ultimate Resolution: In as much as God does not require our Belief and Acknowledgment of this *Mystery* of our Faith, to amuse our Understandings, or to engage us in nice and subtle Speculations, but in order to the better Conduct and Regulation of our Lives.

I have pitch'd upon these Words of the *Apostle*, as containing the most serious and affectionate Application to this Purpose. *Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption.*

By the Appellation of *Holy* applied to the Spirit of God in my Text, and other Places of the Scripture, we are not to understand only his *absolute* Holiness, as he is consider'd in his own Nature, but with a peculiar Relation to our selves; as he is likewise effectually *Holy*, a Principle productive of *Holiness* in the Members of his Church; the great Spring and Fountain from whence are deriv'd all that Grace and Vertue, by which the Stains of our corrupt Nature are cleans'd, and by which we are endued with those *Divine* Qualities, and that heavenly Disposition of Mind, whereby we come to resemble God himself in his Perfections, and are enabled to conform our Actions to his Will.

And when we reflect upon the infinite Benefits the *Holy* Spirit communicates to us of this nature, we shall quickly discern the mighty Reason the *Apostle* had to deliver so very strict and solemn a Charge to the  
*Ephesians*

A SERMON *Preach'd*

*Ephesians* on this Occasion; and the strong Obligation that lies upon us all to consider it well.

Which that we may be the better able to do, I shall in the *First* Place make it my Business to enquire under what Notion, and for what Reasons, the *Holy Spirit of God* is here represented by the *Apostle* as griev'd at the Sins of Men,

*Secondly*, I shall consider by what particular Kinds and Degrees of Sin, he is more especially griev'd,

And, *Thirdly*, I shall endeavour to explain the Force, and shew the Propriety of the *Apostle's* Argument against our thus grieving him, because we are sealed by him to the day of Redemption.

And, *First*, I am to enquire under what Notion, and for what Reasons the *Holy Spirit of God* is here represented by the *Apostle* as griev'd at the Sins of Men. For here, in the very Entrance on this Argument, I am very sensible of a secret Objection that will arise, and meet me. How can God be griev'd? Is there Passion in the most High? Is he liable to Change and Alteration? And if not, with what Propriety, or even tolerable Sense of Words, can we apply to the *Holy Spirit* an Affection, and that of Grief too, one of the most troublesome in our Nature, a great Instance of our present Imperfection, and one of the main Instruments of our Misery? Can he be touch'd with our Infirmities? Can there be Weakness in the *Almighty*? or can Grief spring up in the very *Fountain* of Joy it self? To which we must answer, That 'tis sure there



there cannot, according to the general and ordinary Sense of human Passions. And therefore, when the *Holy Scriptures* apply these Expressions to *Almighty God*, we must take care so to qualify the Sense of them, as neither to charge his Nature with Imperfections on the one hand, nor his *Holy Word* with Insincerity on the other.

Which Inconveniences we may easily avoid this way, by resolving with our selves, that though there is not any thing of what we properly call *Passion* in the *Divine Nature*, yet there is something of a Superior and infinitely Transcending kind, namely the most strong and vigorous Resentments of Good or Evil in his Will, which he can no more suspend or interrupt than he can his very Being. For we must take care of the chilling Influence of a cold sort of *Philosophy*, which, whilst it pretends to exempt *Almighty God* from human Passions, really deprives him of the proper Perfections of his Nature, and leaves him an indifferent and unactive Being; than which nothing can be a greater Derogation from his Honour.

For these Propensities and Inclinations of *God's Will*, though they are more intense and vigorous in themselves, than can be conceiv'd by human Thought; and answer to the utmost force, and all the Ends of human Passions, yet do they not partake of the Nature of our Passions, for these two Reasons; First, because they are the Motions of *God's Will* immediately, and can't reside in any sensitive Appetite. (which is the proper Seat of human Passions) in as much as *God's* pure and simple

SERM. XI. simple Nature admits of no Composition whatsoever, much less of a Material one. And, *Secondly*, because these Motions never fluctuate in the least, never rise or fall, ebb or flow, but are standing and regular, co-eternal with his Nature, and so not liable to the Contingencies of Time, or the variety of outward Accidents.

And so far as Grief is a Disposition in God's Will, and a Result of those two original Resentments in the *Divine* Nature, of that *eternal Love* to the Persons of Men, as they are his Creatures, and of that infinite and irreconcilable Abhorrence and Detestation of their Sins, which are the only Hindrance of their Happiness; so far, and in this Sense I apprehend it applicable to the *Holy Spirit of God*, in these words of the *Apostle*.

But then we must take care again to understand this so, as that this Resentment may be without any Diminution or Disturbance to God's Happiness; for *that* we know is entirely secure, and founded within himself only; and the Reason why Grief, even in human Passions, is attended with Molestation, if we consider rightly, is not from the very Passion it self, but from a secret Reflection that goes along with it, that what is now the Object of our Sorrow does or may some way or other affect our Well-being. But this we are sure can have no place in God Almighty, who is a self-sufficient and infinitely perfect Being.

The *Spirit of God* therefore is in this Sense said to be *grieved* for the Sins of Men, because of his infinite and most tender Love to

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our Persons, and at the same time his eternal Hatred and Displeasure at our Sins. And the Reasons why this Expression of his being griev'd is peculiarly applied to him, are these that follow ;

*First*, Because upon the account of his more immediate Presence with us, and of that Nearness of Relation which he is pleas'd to take upon himself towards us, our Sins are now become more directly odious and offensive to him.

*Secondly*, Because we now commit them in Contempt of the highest Acts, and utmost Expressions of infinite Love, and cross and disappoint the *Holy Spirit* of God in his last Remedy, whereby he is pleas'd to undertake for our Recovery.

And, *Thirdly*, and as a Result and Consequence from both the former Considerations, Because by thus ungratefully dealing with him we provoke him to withdraw himself from us, and all the Communications of his Goodness with him.

And, *First*, we are said to grieve the *Holy Spirit*, because, upon the account of his more immediate Presence with us, and of the Nearness of that Relation which he is pleas'd to take upon himself towards us, our Sins are now become more highly odious and offensive to him, as being committed more directly under his Eye, and with Circumstances of the greatest Irreverence towards him. He is pleas'd, we know, to look upon *Christians* as his own Propriety, and as peculiarly separated to his Honour from the whole bulk of Mankind : Our *Bodies* are his  
Temples ;



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1 Cor. 6. 17.

*Temples*; and by vertue of our mystical Union with him being joyn'd to the Lord, *We become one Spirit*, as the *Apostle* in the highest and noblest strain of Divine Eloquence expresses himself. By reason of which so very strict an Alliance, every Sin we now commit, besides its original and natural Turpitude, carries in it a fresh and accessory Guilt and Provocation. *Know ye not*, says St. Paul, *that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?* And how are they so? but by the Inhabitation and intimate Presence of this Divine Person within our Hearts.

1 Cor. 6. 19.

And therefore when we set up the *Idols* of our own foolish Lusts and Passions in our Heart, which is properly his Altar, and bow down our selves, and serve those vicious Inclinations, which we ought to sacrifice in Obedience to his Will, this must needs be in the highest Degree grievous and offensive to him, as being indeed the deepest Violation of his Honour. For *what concord is there between the Holy Spirit and Belial?* or *what agreement hath the temple of God with Idols?*

2 Cor. 6. 16.

The *Holy Ghost* indeed has oblig'd himself, by vertue of his being our *Blessed Saviour's Advocate* here on Earth, to come and abide with us, and not entirely to give us up, and leave us to our selves, till he sees we will no longer hear his Reproof, and are desperately lost to all his Counsels. So that we see he has in some Measure confin'd himself to us, and 'tis by that Means become a great deal more in our Power to offend and grieve him, in that he has undertaken not to desert us presently, but for a while to strive with our Ingratitude; and this, if any thing, should

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should prove an Argument upon our Iniquity not to offend him, by taking in his worst Enemies, our Sins and Pollutions, into his awful Presence. And if yet we will do so, if we shall treat the *Holy Spirit of God* with such Contempt and Insolence, as to provide no better Company for him, than our bestial Inclinations, and vilest Lusts, how much must the Influence, think we, of such a base unworthy Neighbourhood afflict him?

Again, *Secondly*, we grieve the *Holy Spirit of God* by our Sins, because they are now committed in Contempt of the highest and last Expressions of infinite Love; and we thereby cross and disappoint the *Holy Spirit* in his last Remedy, whereby he is pleas'd to undertake for our Recovery. And thus every Sin we are now guilty of is in some measure a Sin against the *Holy Ghost*, (though not that peculiar great and irremissible one) as being acted in despite of all his powerful Assistances, in defiance of all his Rebukes, and by way of the most ungracious return for infinite Kindness.

For under *Christ* himself, the *Holy Spirit* is now the great Solicitor and Mediator with Mankind in *God's* behalf: And though the Malice of all our Sins in the last Result strikes farther, and rebounds upon the blessed Father and the Son; yet considering that the *Holy Ghost* is the immediate Minister of *God's* Will on Earth, and transacts all the great Affairs in the Church of *Christ*, quickening and enlivening the whole, on this Account, I say, our Sins are now directly aim'd at him, and would seem to cast the greatest Blemish and

SERM. X. and Reflection on his Honour; as if he were not faithful to this *great House of God*, and did not supply his Servants with that *Sufficiency* of Spiritual Assistance, which is necessary to answer the great End and Design of his Mission, and Office of *Mediation* with Mankind.

So that whilst he pours out all the Riches of his Grace and Love upon us, and finds them all unsuccessful, and no other Returns from us but such as we ought to be ashamed to make him, no wonder then if he begin to enter his Complaint against us, in the Language of the *Prophet*, and appeal to all the World for our ungrateful Behaviour: *And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge I pray you betwixt me and my vineyard: What could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?* These and many more such Expostulations, which we meet with in the Holy Scriptures, are the Expressions of Grief and Concern; such as imply the utmost Unwillingness to deal severely even by those, whom yet by all the wise Methods of his Goodness he could not reform. The *Holy Spirit of God* here represents himself as one who would be glad to spare Sinners, if he could, and therefore we may be sure 'tis grievous to him that by their Sins they will not suffer him.

And for Men thus to disappoint the *Holy Spirit of Love*, for that is his peculiar Title as well as Nature, to make him thus *wail that* *be*

Isa. 30. 18.



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he may be gracious, and pay Attendance on us, through the tedious Stages of our Folly and Vanity; and to stand by, and be a Witness of our Despight and Disobedience against himself, with the importunate Offers of infinite Kindness in his Hand, is a Practice of that nature, that what Man is there of any Tenderness or Ingenuity in his Soul who can bear the harshness of such an ungrateful Reflection as this? 'Tis an Argument of God's infinite Mercy, that he is pleas'd only to express himself as griev'd at such Impiety and Baseness, that his Anger does not smoke, and his Indignation flame out against such Sinners, and he consume them in a Moment.

But, behold, instead of this: *O the height and depth of the patience and long-suffering of God!* because we have given him so many Promises that he should expect better things from us, and he has given us so many powerful Motives and Reasons why he might, after all his Resentments of our Contumelies against him, come out to us under the milder style of Grief only, not to consume us for our treacherous Baseness, but to convince us of it, and to persuade us from it! Who can express the loving kindness of the Lord, or show forth all his praise! *How unsearchable are his Mercies, and his Love past finding out!* But let us take care we do not always thus provoke him, and slight his Patience.

'Twas the base proceeding of the Jewish Nation to affront, and grieve him, after innumerable Experiences of his exceeding Mercies towards them, even almost to a degree of Fondness, that made infinite Love at last

turn

X

turn

SERMON XI.

Isa. 63.

turn into Bitterness and afflict them. As we find the Account described in the *Holy Prophet* in the most affectionate and lively Manner. And the Reason at last given for God's afflicting that People, because after all his infinite Love and Tenderness towards them, they *rebell'd, and vex'd his Holy Spirit, therefore he was turn'd to be their Enemy, and he fought against them.*

And surely, considering the much greater Obligations he has laid upon all *Christians*, whom he has admitted into a State of the highest Privileges, and most glorious Expectations, we may conclude his Resentments of our unworthy Behaviour at last will be in Proportion to the Mercies we have receiv'd from his Hands, and then, we are sure, they must be infinite.

There is no doubt but God observes and hates the Sins of Men, wheresoever they are found, and his *wrath abides on every worker of iniquity*, of what Denomination soever, according to the Measure of his Sins, but 'tis the prophane *Christian*, that *Emphatically grieves his Holy Spirit*, which expresses and implies a strange and peculiar Degree of Baseness in our Sins, as well as the Guilt of common Disobedience; in as much as a Man is said to be provok'd indeed by the evil Turns of his Enemy, and to hate him for them, but he is properly griev'd at the Offences of his Friend. And therefore, besides the common and general Obligations of Duty that lie upon a *Christian*, the very Nearness of Relation that we bear to *Almighty God*, being his Children and Friends, should, one would think, be a most powerful

powerful Restraint upon us from Evils, and *SENSE*  
 would be so, if we had any thing of that  
 Goodness and Gratitude in our Tempers, that  
 we ought to have.

But if Arguments of this nature do not  
 carry Force enough in them to keep us from  
 grieving our best and most intimate Friend  
 and Benefactor, the *Holy Spirit of God*; let  
 us consider, in the *Third* place, what our grie-  
 ving of him farther implies, which is, that  
 by this ungrateful dealing with him, we pro-  
 voke him to remove and withdraw himself  
 from us, and all the Communications of his  
 Goodness with him.

Now tho' this seems rather the Result and  
 Consequence of Grief, than any thing of the  
 formal Notion of it; yet because in *Divinity*,  
 and when we speak of *Almighty God*, we are  
 allow'd to give the Name of the internal Dis-  
 position to the outward Effect produc'd by it,  
 upon that account the *Holy Spirit of God* is  
 not improperly said to be griev'd, when he  
 deals with Men, in a way suitable to that of  
 their dealing with one another, when under  
 the Force and Influence of that Passion. And  
 we are very well acquainted how the Act of  
 grieving amongst Men is apt to produce Of-  
 fence, Regret, and Distance: It being one  
 of the first and most general Instincts in our  
 Nature, not to associate and unite it self with  
 what is so very disagreeable.

Now whether 'tis that our Sins do by a  
 sort of natural Efficiency pollute and stain our  
 Souls, and so indispose them for the conti-  
 nued Influences of the *Holy Spirit*, or whe-  
 ther upon our Provocations, he is pleas'd to



SERM. XI. restrain them by way of a judicial Consequence, I need not here determine. This is certain, we may forfeit and diminish, and even lose this blessed Influx of *Divine Grace* upon our Minds; and 'tis to be hoped, that we have all had such a lively Sense, and such Convictions of these heavenly Operations within us, one time or other, as that, when we have been so unhappy as to offend God by our Sins, we could easily perceive the Change and Alteration, that follow'd in our Souls in that Dryness, and Desolation, and Barrenness of Spirit, which ensues more especially upon our Commission of Sins of a greater Malignity and Willfulness.

For the common Pollutions of our Lives, the Sins as they are call'd of *daily Incurſion*, are such, as, by the Weakness of our present Nature, 'tis impossible for us wholly to avoid. And therefore the *Holy Spirit of God*, in these cases, is not pleas'd to take the Forfeiture; but notwithstanding the little Films of Corruption which these Sins cast about us, he still continues to stream out upon our Hearts with so vigorous a Light from Heaven, that no bad Influence of this nature can intercept or stifle him, but is daily dissolv'd and dissipated by his vigorous Rays, as an early Cloud and Morning-dew by the heat of the Sun. But then, when our Omissions or Commissions grow *notorious*, when our Neglect of spiritual Improvements runs on; and leaves upon our Mind an Indisposition to our Duty, or when we commit Sins with a high hand, with Degrees of Malice and Defiance to God's Will and Law, our guilty

ty Mind then darts not for some time look towards him. The *Blessed Spirit* goes and returns to his place, he retires and hides himself from us, till we seek him again with Sorrow, and recover the light of his Favour by our Repentance.

SERM. XI.  
Hosea 5. 15.

And the more frequently we commit Sins of this Nature and Degree of Aggravation, so in Proportion we still weaken the Influences of *God's Grace* and *Spirit* to our selves; and though he may indeed forgive us, for what is past, as he very frequently does, and be reconcil'd, as to the final Issues of our Repentance, yet such frequent Breaches as these will necessarily bring on some Estrangement between him and us at present, and our intercourse can never be so Cordial, when 'tis interrupted by such often repeated Offences. A Man, in like manner, will forgive his Friend a great many Slips and Imprudences, and some wilful Transgressions, but to find him frequently affronting him, in the same or greater Instances, after all the Kindness of Admonition too, must necessarily wear off and abate by degrees the Firmness of his Affection, even to the Person that had once the greatest Interest in his Heart. Because he cannot but conclude, that such a one does not any longer either desire, or deserve to maintain a friendly Correspondence with him.

And thus having shewn what is meant by grieving the *Holy Spirit*, and for what Reasons he is more peculiarly said to be griev'd by the Sins of Christians; I come now in the *Second Place* to consider, by what particular kinds and degrees of Sins, we may be in a

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greater measure said to *Grieve* him. And these Sins we may in the general resolve to be *such*, as either at first do wholly defeat or disappoint his holy Influences of their due Force and Energy upon our Hearts; or come afterwards to be in the most downright Opposition to his Light, and *Divine* Assistances. Of the *former* sort I shall mention only, and that will be sufficient, an habitual Inconsideration and Inadvertency of Mind to the sacred Motions and Inspirations of the *Holy Spirit*; and of the *latter*, Sins of Presumption in general, with those particular kinds of them, Sensuality, Malice and Spiritual Pride, against which the *Holy Ghost* declares himself to bear the most irreconcilable Aversion, because *these* are indeed the most destructive of his great work of Sanctification, which 'tis the Will of God, and his own chief Design to carry on in the World, for the Benefit and Happiness of Mens Souls.

The *First* thing I shall mention, as being more especially grievous to the *Holy Spirit*, is an habitual Inconsideration and Inadvertence of his *holy* Motions within us. There is a certain peculiar Frame and Temper of Soul requir'd, a *Sobriety* of Mind, without which the Spirit of *God* cannot, or will not concur to the Purification of our corrupt Nature. And which 'tis in our own Power, by vertue of his general preventing Grace, to form and prepare within our selves; and he expects we should do so, it being the Ground and Foundation, upon which he is to proceed with in his after-workings. Now, this consists in preserving our Minds in a cool

and temperate state, and to be ready to receive his

grace

X



and serious Disposition, in regulating and SER M. XI.  
 calming our Affections, and calling in and  
 checking the inordinate pursuits of our Pas-  
 sions after the Vanities and Pleasures of this  
 World; which, that we should do indeed,  
 is of such mighty Consequence to our Im-  
 provement in *Holiness*, that if we enquire in-  
 to the Reasons of Mens Non-proficiency un-  
 der the most powerful Means of Grace which  
 God has given us, we shall find it to be chiefly  
 from *hence*, that Men do not look enough  
 within themselves, they don't observe and  
 watch the Disorders and Imperfections of  
 their own Spirits, nor attend with any care  
 to those Directions and Remedies, that would  
 be continually thrown up upon their Thoughts  
 from this *Fountain of Life* within them, if  
 they were but serious and recollected enough  
 to give them Admittance. Men are general-  
 ly lost in the Hurry and Distractions of Life,  
 in the Business or Pleasures of it, and seem  
 to think that their *Regeneration*, their new  
 Nature, will spring and grow up within them,  
 with as little Care and Thought of their own,  
 as the first Rudiments of their Bodies were  
 form'd within the Bowels of their Mother.

Psal. 71. 6.

Whereas there is nothing more certain,  
 than that the *Holy Spirit* of God does not or-  
 dinarily co-operate to the Reformation of our  
 Nature, but by taking *into* his Concurrence  
 our own Thoughtfulness and careful Atten-  
 dance to his Operations: Which are gene-  
 rally lost upon us, whilst, in the *Prophet's*  
 Language, we scatter our ways, we squan-  
 der and throw away our Hearts upon Varie-  
 ties of Folly that affect us, and leave that one  
 thing

Jer. 3. 13.

SERM. XI. *thing needful*, a due Care of our spiritual Improvements, quite neglected.

There is many a Man, that, for the main of his Life, is regular and orderly in his Conversation, and generally observes the Seasons of outward Discipline, of Fasting and Prayer, with some Care; who yet in the Intervals of these Duties gives too great a *Loose* to his Thoughts, and Affections, and Discourse, and seems to adjourn the great Business of his Duty to the next Hour of his Devotion: Whereas they are indeed these Vacancies and Intervals from his immediate Attendance upon his Duty, that are the great and proper Opportunities of Improvement, by observing himself, and comparing the gradual Increases of his spiritual Strength, and by stifling and subduing every irregular Thought and Motion that stirs within his Breast. And if these Persons, whom yet we may and must in Equity and Charity term good Men, lose so much in their spiritual Estate, for want of better adjusting and ballancing their Accounts, what then must we think of others, who forfeit all, by scarce ever bestowing a serious Thought upon themselves, and their own Conduct in their Lives? Surely there is not any Temper of Mind less a Friend to a Spirit of Religion, than a thoughtless, light and inconsiderate one; that, by the continual Succession and Transport and Hurry of vain Affections, excludes every thing that is serious from an Admission to the Soul, and from leaving those Impressions there, which should influence the Life and outward Actions. So that I could almost venture to  
say

say that a Man were better be guilty of a single Act of wilful Sin, than to lye generally under this Slumber of Spirit, this Supineness, this Lethargy of Soul. Because the Guilt of the former is so very open and importunate, that a Man of any Principles can have no Rest in his Spirit, 'till he is in some hopeful way of Recovery by an After-Repentance. Whereas the latter perceives not its own Danger, and so goes on without Conviction; and in the Consequence quite defeats and frustrates all the blessed Means of Restoration. And if we measure the Grief and Concern of the *Holy Spirit* at the Sins of Men, from the Degrees of his Frustration and Disappointment, we may conclude there is no State of Mind, that he is less pleas'd with, unless it be that of an harden'd, daring, presumptuous Offender;

Which was the *Second Sort and Degree of Sins*, that I am to consider as in the highest manner offensive to the *Holy Spirit of God*.

An inconsiderate inadvertent Mind will not be at the Pains to see the Light, but a bold presumptuous Sinner sees it clearly, and hates it, and tries to put it out. The former offends by his Carelessness, the latter by direct Hatred and Opposition. Such a one is the profess'd Enemy of God, comes up to a close Engagement, and, as Holy *Job* expresses it, runs upon his neck, and upon the *Job 15. 26.* thick bosses of his buckler.

And herein lies the heinous Guilt and Aggravation of this sort of Sins above those of Ignorance and Infirmary, that whereas these two suppose a Defect, the one in the Understanding,



SERM. XI.

ing, the other in the Passions. The Sin of Presumption, in the mean time, includes in it all the Malice of Willfulness and Rebellion; when a Man is not ignorant, and is not surpriz'd, but knowingly and resolutely goes against the express Declarations of God's Word, and the lively, full, and intimate Convictions of his own Mind and Conscience. So that *this*, is the very Measure and Standard of Iniquity, and all other Sins of what kind soever, take their several Distinctions of more, or less guilty from their nearer Approach to, or greater Distance from Sins of this Nature and Denomination. In as much as these imply the greatest Opposition to God's Will, Contempt of his Holiness, and Defiance of his Justice. *Because thou hast despis'd me*, was the black Stile, under which God by the Prophet raz'd the Murder and Adultery of David; as having no Character worse than that, by which he could express so foul a Revolt. And for us to contemn, and *do despight* to the Spirit of Grace, which is the true Interpretation of all Sins of this Quality, if any thing can do so, must surely grieve him, not only as to the inward Resentment and Disposition of his Will towards such Sinners, but as to the utmost Consequences of his outward Dealing with them, his retiring from them, and forsaking them, in Proportion to their Guilt.

Other Sins, that have yet some *alloy* in their Nature, and *somewhat* to plead in their Excuse, as Sins of Ignorance and Infirmary, do yet in some Measure weaken and diminish

his glorious Presence with us, and cast a Cloud for a while upon the Light of his Favour towards us. But the ill Consequence of these Sins, through God's Mercy, and our own careful Endeavours, may, if they are taken in time, be more easily repaired, in as much as our Will, though under a Bruise, in such a Case, retains yet some Disposition to the Grace of God, as a newly extinguish'd Taper does to Light. But our Acts of presumptuous Sins, more especially if repeated, quite break off the Staff of our spiritual Strength, smother and extinguish the Remains of Life within us for a while, and leave us senseless and groveling in our own Pollutions. And if we recover again, 'tis with Pangs and Convulsions of Mind, and like the *Travel* of a new Birth, 'till another Nature be form'd within us.

This indeed is the Condition and Consequence of all presumptuous Sins in general. But then these are some particular Sins of this Nature and Distinction, that besides the formal Notion of Presumption, which is common to them with the rest, do yet, by a more direct and malignant Influence of their own, make Havock of our spiritual Estate, as they are presumptuous Sins of such a particular kind and constitution: Such for Instance, as those I mention'd, Sensuality, Malice, and Spiritual Pride; which, that they do more especially grieve the *Holy Spirit*, we may be well assur'd, when we only remember that they are the blackest Characters of a carnal Mind, which we know is downright *Enmi-*

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SER. M. XI. *ty with God himself; and because they directly oppose and contradict the Holy Ghost in those Graces of Purity, Love, and Humility, which he sets the highest value on himself, and which he most carefully endeavours to promote and advance in Mens Hearts, as the greatest Instances of our Holiness, and the main Conditions of our Happiness. But I have not now time to take a more particular View of these, I shall leave the more thorow Consideration of them therefore to your own Thoughts, and shall proceed,*

*In the Third and last Place, to explain the Force, and shew the Propriety of the Apostle's Argument against our grieving the Holy Spirit, because we are sealed by him to the day of redemption.*

*By the day of redemption may be meant in general the time of our Entrance upon our eternal and unchangeable State of Happiness in another World; whether at our leaving these Bodies, in the Hour of Death, or our resuming them afterwards at the general Resurrection: Though I should rather chuse to understand them in the latter of these Senses, because we find the Apostle uses the same Term in another Place, where we are certain he speaks of the Resurrection in these Words, waiting for the adoption, to wit the Redemption of our Bodies. And 'tis to this Day of Redemption that we are consign'd by the seal of the holy Spirit these Three ways.*

Rom. 8. 23.

*First, In that by the Efficacy of his Grace we receive his real Stamp and Impress upon our Souls, and are made Partakers of the divine Nature, and become meet and qualify'd for the*

the



the Enjoyment of the inheritance of the saints *SERM. XI*  
*in light.*

Secondly, Because we receive him as a Sign <sup>2 Pet. 1. 4.</sup> and Mark of God's Propriety in us, that we belong to Christ, and as a Condition and Security, by God's Appointment, of our future Happiness.

And, Thirdly, We receive him as an Earnest and Assurance to our own private Spirits, that we have a Title to eternal Life and Happiness, and shall not fail of it, if we persevere to do his Will; because the Spirit of God bears *Rom. 8. 16.* witness with our Spirit that we are the children of God.

These are the most remarkable Uses of a Seal, and the chief Relations that it bears; and though, by the help of a good Invention and Fancy, a Man might possibly discover more, yet I believe they would be such only, as are involv'd in those I have already mention'd, or coincident with them. These however, that I have before described, I am sure are clearly express'd in, or plainly deducible from the *Holy Scriptures*, and that shews them to be most pertinent to my present Subject.

And, First, We are seal'd by the Holy Spirit of God, in that by the Power and Efficacy of his Grace we take a real Stamp and Impress from him upon our Souls, being made *Partakers of the Divine Nature*, and render'd meet and qualified for the inheritance of the saints in light. For this indeed is the main End of the Holy Spirit's dwelling with us, to rectifie the disorderly Motions of our Souls, to heal our inward Distempers, and to restore

SERM. VI

store that Image of himself upon our Nature; which is so far lost by our *Original* and *actual* Corruptions. And truly unless our Spirits are in some measure thus reformed, and set right, and deliver'd from under those Pollution into which we are sunk, 'tis impossible there should be the least Communion between him and us, whatever. For our Similitude to him is the only Ground and Foundation of our Fellowship with him; For what Communion is there between light and darkness? and if we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. So that 'tis only by the Renewal of our Minds that we are made after the image of him that created us; and thus by representing him in that Image we are still more susceptible of his Influences, and by means of a friendly and daily Intercourse with him, we are more and more transform'd into his Likeness, till we are satisfied with it. I had not chosen to have said, however.

Nor is this Representation of his Purity and Holiness in our selves requir'd only as an arbitrary Condition of our gracious Correspondence with the *Holy Spirit*; but is absolutely necessary likewise in its Nature, as a State and Temper of Soul really qualifying and disposing us for Spiritual Happiness. For if there should be no Suitableness in Nature and Disposition between God and us, how is it possible then, his Happiness should be ours, if ours must consist, as it does, in the Contemplation and Love of his Perfections? So that there does not appear the least Ground of Reason why some Men should question,

Col. 3. 10.

as they do; whether *Holiness* of *Life* and Pu-  
 rity of Heart be necessary not *only* as a sta-  
 ted Condition; but as a natural Qualification  
 for our future Happiness; Of we allow only  
 this one Supposition, which surely is a very  
 reasonable one, that a Likeness and Enjoy-  
 ment must require a Similitude of Nature  
 and Inclination: Which is a Proposition that  
 seems to me so very clear, as not to be ca-  
 pable of any Proof more evident than it self.  
 But now, a Conformity of Will and Affec-  
 tions to the Will of *God* is what we mean,  
 when we speak of Holiness as it is in Men;  
 and to produce this is the proper End and De-  
 sign of the sanctifying Influences of the *Holy*  
*Spirit*; and therein consists all the Image and  
 Resemblance of him that we are represented  
 as capable of in the Holy Scriptures. For,  
 by his Sacred Presence with us, we are not  
 more nearly united to his Nature and Being  
 than we were before, but by virtue of that  
 Presence we receive from him a more im-  
 mediate Virtue, and a greater Fulness of hea-  
 venly Influences. He communicates to us,  
 and we derive from him, *Grace for Grace*; we  
 take such Characters and Features of Resem-  
 blance into our Spirits, as correspond to the  
 original Patterns of Holiness and Perfection  
 within himself; and thus we are sealed by  
 him in the first Sense, by way of Preparati-  
 on and order to the Day of our Redemption,  
 the Happiness he designs us in a future State.  
 And since we are so, and the new Nature  
 that is wrought within us grows up under  
 the forming Power of his Hands; what do  
 we, when we grieve him by our Sins, but  
 unravel



SERM. XI.

unravel and destroy his Work, set him back in his Designs, by breaking down those Piles and Fences which he had been hitherto raising against the Overflowings of our natural Corruption, and so at last entirely defeat him in his gracious Methods and Counsels for our Salvation?

Secondly, We are seal'd by the *Holy Spirit* in order to our Redemption, in that we receive him as a Sign and Mark of *God's* Propriety in us that we belong to *Christ*, and as a Condition and Security, by the *Divine* Appointment of our future Happiness; since *God* is pleas'd to admit none for his Children, but those that have receiv'd the *Spirit of his Son into their Hearts*. And then, we are sure, if we are not Children, *unles* can we be heirs, either heirs with *God*, or joint-heirs with *Christ*; which is the strong Reverse of the *Apostle's* Argument in his Epistle to the *Romans*.

Rom. 8. 17.

But now, if the *Spirit of Christ* dwell in us, by that we shall be known hereafter, and distinguish'd from others, as we are at present consign'd over, in the most proper Sense of that Word, to our own Redemption. For, as the *Apostle* reasons in the same Chapter, If the *Spirit of him that rais'd up Jesus from the Dead dwell in you, he that rais'd up Christ from the Dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you*.

Rom. 8. 11.

From hence then it appears that the *Holy Spirit* within us is the Mark and Character which *God* sets upon his Servants, appropriating them to himself. And in whom so ever he finds it, when he comes to reckon with

with the World for their Transgressions, he will pass over that Man, and will not suffer the Destroyer to come in and hurt him. I cannot better express this than in the Language of the Prophet *Malachi* to this very Purpose of my Text, where speaking of those that fear'd God's Name, he says, *And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day when I make up my Jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him. In the day when I make up my Jewels, that is, when I set my Seal and Mark of Appropriation, as Dr. Hammond very well observes in his Exposition on the very Words of my Text.*

But now, if the *Holy Spirit* be thus the Seal, the Sign and Security of our Salvation, then by grieving and provoking him by our Sins, we break up this Seal with our own Hands, we cancel our firmest Security, and, as much as in us lyes, reverse our own Title to *Eternal Life*. And I think nothing more than that either can, or need be said, to convince us of the extream Danger and Evil of such a Practice.

*Thirdly*, and to conclude all, Besides that the *Holy Spirit* within us is a firm Security and Condition in the Nature of the thing it self, and by God's Appointment of our Title to eternal Life; he is likewise an *Earnest* within our Hearts, and a particular Assurance to our own private Spirits, that we shall not fail of our Salvation, if we go on to please him; because *the Spirit of God bears witness with our Spirit, that we are the children of God.* *Rom. 8. 16.*

And this inward Testimony of our Mind is very different from that outward one in his

SERM. II.

2 Cor. 1. 22.

Word, which latter may be eternally true, (that he that has the *Spirit of God* shall live for ever,) and yet many a particular Man may not have that Assurance, and that immediate Application of this general Truth to himself: So that though this private Testimony of our own Mind proceed upon the Ground, and is form'd according to the Direction of *God's Word* without, yet that it shall be lively and effectual to our Comfort depends upon the secret Operation of his *Spirit within*: Who, by infusing his heavenly Consolations into our Souls, by quickning and enlivening our drooping Spirits, and giving us a high and spiritual Gust and Relish of his Promises, raises bright and joyous Resentments within us, and makes a Man almost anticipate the Bliss to which he is going. In this Sense *God* is said by the *Apostle* to the *Corinthians* to have seal'd us, and to have given the earnest of the *Spirit* in our hearts. And that Earnest not only by way of Confirmation of our Title to Happiness, but as an actual Part of the Reward it self at present, the Fullness and Completion of which we expect hereafter.



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# SERMON

Preach'd first before the

UNIVERSITY, 1708:

And afterwards before the

Right Honourable the Lord Mayor  
and the Aldermen of *London*, at  
*St. Paul's Cathedral*,

On *Sunday, November 11, 1711:*

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# SERMON

Preached at the

UNIVERSITY, 1708.

And afterwards before the

Right Honourable the Lord Bishop  
and the Aldermen of London, at  
St. Paul's Cathedral,

On Sunday, December 11, 1711.

To the Honourable

**JAMES BERTIE, Esq;**

O F

*Stanwel in Middlesex.*

One of the Knights of the Shire for  
that County.

S I R,

**I** Presume to inscribe this plain Discourse  
to your Name, which, by means of a late  
happy Retirement, for some Weeks, in your  
Family, I had a nearer Opportunity of preach-  
ing before that venerable Audience.

I hope there is no false Divinity, nor any bad  
Principles in it; I would carefully avoid putting  
a Slur of that Nature upon a Degree which I  
owe to your Favour and Bounty; and for which,  
I am sure, I can never forget to thank you so  
long as I remember my self.

I would not offer any Paper to your Hands,  
with Blemishes in it of that sort, which your  
own true Sense of, and thorow Acquaintance  
with Religion, would enable you so quickly to  
espy; and which your hearty Zeal and Love for  
the Practice of it, and your resolv'd steady Ad-



## Epistle Dedicatory.

herence to its Principles and Doctrines would make you so entirely disallow.

I am very sensible, the Character and Principles I have endeavour'd to describe in the following Sermon are as directly contrary to yours as any thing can be; whose personal Accomplishments are so truly Great, and yet join'd with that sincere, unaffected Humility, that every one else, that knows you, seems better acquainted with them than your self. And at the same time they are render'd in the highest degree amiable, by a wonderful Condescension to the Defects and Infirmities of other Men. Your candid, gentle, courteous Treatment of  
Rom. 12. 16. every Man of how low Estate soever has gain'd you the firmest Interest in the Hearts of all, even those Men not excepted, who know themselves to be at the greatest distance from you in Profession and Principles.

And indeed your Abilities of doing good are so many and so unconfined, that nothing can exceed them so much, as your own most generous and ready Inclinations to apply them. No Gentleman, I am verily perswaded, is more ways qualified to benefit others, nor any one more heartily inclin'd to do good, in any single Instance, than your self in all. So very fully and clearly do that true Goodness of Nature, that remarkable Happiness of Temper, that unrestrain'd Beneficence and Generosity of Mind, which so eminently distinguish every one of your Noble Line, shine out in your Person, and express themselves in your whole Conduct and Conversation.

## Epistle Dedicatory

I have now had, for some Years past, a more immediate Opportunity of observing something very like this, to my greatest Pleasure and Satisfaction, in a younger Person, whom you did me the Honour to place and entrust under my Care in the University. I am sure, I can speak this of him, without the Fondness and Partiality of the Tutor, that if a true, just, and graceful Modesty, if a most agreeable Candour, Sweetness, and Evenness of Temper, if good Sense and excellent Parts, if strict Virtue and perfect Regularity of Life and Manners, are Arguments what we may expect from a young Gentleman hereafter, that then you have the best Ground of Reason to hope, that your eldest Son, in his riper Years, will prove no less than a Wise and a Good Man, and not fail to rise up to the Virtues and Character of his Noble Family.

That he may do so, has, I know, Sir, been always your greatest and justest Concern and Care, as well as that of your Excellent Lady; by whose admirable Prudence and Conduct, in the Direction and Management of so numerous a Family, there are no Consequences that can prove so happy, from the most pious Care, the exactest Methods, and greatest Wisdom of Education, which you have not Reason to expect. And in all other Instances, how very far she must contribute to your real Happiness and Comfort of Life, is not so very difficult to determine, when we only consider her Nobility of Birth as attended and improv'd by those Perfections and Graces of her Mind, which are the truest Ornaments of her Sex and Quality; which in the

## Epistle Dedicatory.

**1 Pet. 3. 4.** *Accounts of Religion it self, the surest Measure of our Judgement, are of the greatest Price, and will always render her most truly Honourable in the Opinions of Men.*

*That you may ever continue to find all Prosperity in this your most worthy Consort, and Family, and in every other Instance, is the most sincere and affectionate Desire, and to have it answer'd will be to the highest Satisfaction of,*

Honour'd Sir,

Your most oblig'd, faithful,

and humble Servant,

Stanwell, Decemr  
ber 6, 1711.

WILL. TILLY.



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*The Nature and Instances of Spiritual  
Pride explain'd from our Saviour's  
Parable of the Pharisee and Publican.*

A  
S E R M O N  
O N

LUKE XVIII. 9, 10, 11, 12.

*And he spake this Parable unto certain which  
trusted in themselves that they were Righte-  
ous, and despised others.*

*Two Men went up to the Temple to pray, the one  
a Pharisee, and the other a Publicane.*

*The Pharisee stood and pray'd thus with him-  
self, God, I thank thee, that I am not as  
other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulte-  
rers, or even as this Publicane.*

*I fast twice in the Week, I give Tithes of all  
that I possess.*

**O**UR Blessed Saviour directs this Para-  
ble against a *Sect* of Men, who were  
in their *Affections* the bitterest Ene-  
mies to his Person, and in their *Opinions* and  
*Persuasions* the most fundamentally opposite  
to

SERM. XII. to his Truth and Doctrine of any that he met with in the World, as bad as he found it. I need not tell you I mean the *Pharisees*, a Generation of Hypocrites, that, under the specious and assuming Pretences of a more refin'd Godliness, did eat out the very Heart of Piety, and dar'd to set by and evacuate the Law of God himself, in the most important Instances of it, to make way for, or to raise the Reputation of their own little unauthoriz'd uncommanded Superstitions.

At the same time, they gave themselves out for the only Men of Sanctity, that understood best the Power of Goldiness, and liv'd up to the Strictness and Rigour of it; and as those who were by Consequence the peculiar Favourites of Heaven, in the meanwhile rejected almost all the rest of Mankind, as poor loose carnal Souls, mere mortal Men, but one Degree above Heathens, and as intirely unacquainted with those mystical Unions, and secret Correspondencies with the Almighty, which none but themselves, it seems, of so elevated a Piety, were thought worthy to be admitted to.

And no wonder that Men thus swollen, and bloated with so fond a Conceit of themselves, and unreasonable a Contempt of their Neighbours, should act agreeably to these Principles, and betray the Tumours and Rotteness of their Hearts, by a suitable Deportment towards their Brethren; and at the same time, by an undecent encroaching Boldness, affront Almighty God himself, whilst they pretended to address him with purer Ordinance

Our

November XL 1711.

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Our Blessed Lord, who by the Penetration of his All-searching Spirit could discover Pride and Hypocritic, under what demure Pretences soever they might lurk; and who bore a more irreconcilable Hatred to them wherever he found them, tho' sanctified with the most godly Professions and colourable Titles, endeavours to take down this empty swelling Humour of these Men: And to this end, amongst his other Discourses on some of the most momentous Points of our Religion, he presents them with the *Parable* which I have now read before you; the lively Tenor of which, as well as the admirable Justness of it in all the Proportions of Nature, (as indeed of all our Saviour's Discourses of this sort) we cannot too carefully observe. For if we consider this Parable thoroughly, we shall find it carries in it so very plain and clear a Reference to the Purpose it aim'd at, that when a Pharisee sees himself here describ'd as in a Glass, in such odious Colours, and Postures so very different from what he usually gives himself in his own Opinion, if he uses any Application, he must conclude, that how *righteous* soever he may fancy himself to be, he is not much *more excellent than his Neighbour*; and that those, whom he calls the *Sinners of the World*, may be allow'd at least to stand at a little nearer Distance from him, if not upon a better Bottom than himself.

Prov. 12. 26.

Whether the Picture our Saviour here draws of him, may please him or not, we are not so much concern'd, but that it very well resembles him I shall endeavour to prove,  
by




 SERM. XII. by illustrating it in the main Strokes and Characters of it: My Design being at present this, to describe this Sin of *Spiritual Pride* (the Sin here so severely tax'd by our Saviour in the *Parable*) in the whole Course and Progress of it, and to lay it open in its chief Parts and Branches, those more especially intimated by Christ himself, in the Instance of the Pharisee, and such as 'tis not very unusual for us to meet with in the World at this Day, from *some Men* that too nearly resemble that *proud Self* in their Principles and Practice. And this, I think, cannot better be done, than by having a very careful Eye to every part of this Man's hateful Behaviour; for by that means we shall the more easily discover the Deformity of this odious Vice displaying it self in all its Variety of Shapes, which we could not perhaps so well observe any other way, nor bring under so very short and comprehensive a View at once, as by setting this one lively Example before us we are now enabled to do.

The *Evangelist*, we find, gives us in general a short Account of the Nature of this Sin, in the very Character of the Persons on whose Occasion, he tells us, our Saviour deliver'd the *Parable*, *That they were certain who trusted in themselves, that they were Righteous, and despised others*. So that *spiritual Pride*, we see, implies these two very lovely Qualities, a vain Conceit of, and a fond Dependence on our own spiritual Perfections and Accomplishments; and a haughty insolent Contempt of our Neighbour in Comparison

Comparison with our selves. These are the two great Principles and Ingredients that go to make up the Constitution of spiritual Pride, and the Temper of the Men of this Character; and how very pregnant and comprehensive these two are, and into how many beautiful Limbs they are capable of being farther distributed, we shall presently apprehend, when we come more nearly to survey this proud *Pharisee's* whole Behaviour towards God and his poor Neighbour the *Publicane*, the Persons he had more immediately to deal with in the Text.

And here, in the *first* Place, his Deportment towards Almighty God was criminal, in these four following Particulars.

*First*, In that he sets up and opposes his own Mind and Judgment, as to the very Matters of his Obedience to God's Word and Will, and would needs lay the greatest Weight and Stress upon Duties of an inferior Nature, where God had not laid it; *I fast twice in the Week*, says he, *I pay Tithes of all that I possess*. And this is the first Instance of his spiritual Pride; the Pride of his Judgment, in making his own Opinion the main Rule of his Duty.

*Secondly*, He discovers a vain Dependence on his own Strength and Power, as to the Performance of his Duty, and plainly appears to attribute it to his own Skill and Industry, by the mighty Value and Applause which, we see, he gives himself for it; and every Degree of *Self-Confidence* in this Case is one certain Argument of our Pride.

*Thirdly*,

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*Thirdly*, We may reflect on the fond Complacency and Self-Satisfaction with which this Pharisee here expresses himself, which plainly argues, that he took a false View of his spiritual State, saw himself only on *one* side, and was not truly sensible of the many Defects and Failures of his Life, as he ought to have been.

And then in the *Fourth* Place comes in that familiar arrogant Appeal, that he makes in the Presence of God himself for his Righteousness, which shews us his vain Pretence to Merit; and that he did not rightly acknowledge, as he should have done, *God's Mercy* as the only Ground of Mens *Acceptance* with him.

Mich. 6. 8.

In all these Particulars, how much he offended against that great capital Rule of Duty laid down by the *holy Prophet*, of *walking humbly with his God*, I shall now consider more at large, that by his *Example* we may the more carefully learn to avoid his *Sin*.

And *first*, He betrays the Pride of his Mind, by setting up and opposing his own Opinion and Judgment, as to the very Matters of his Obedience, to God's Word and Will; in that he must needs lay the greatest Weight and Strefs upon Duties of an inferior Nature, and less Consequence, where God had not laid it. *I fast twice in a Week*, says he, *I give Tithes of all that I possess*. 'Tis true, he mentions likewise his Observance of some that must be acknowledg'd the greater Commandments and Points of the Law, as that he was not an *Extortioner*, *Unjust*, an *Adulterer*; but these he passes over more slightly rather



rather as Marks of his Distinction from his SERM. III.  
Neighbours, God, *I thank thee, I am not as*  
*other Men are*, than as any great Accomplish-  
ments in himself. And in pleading the Per-  
fection and Exactness of his Obedience before  
God, he insists chiefly, and with a peculiar  
*Emphasis* on other Matters, *I fast, I pay*  
*Tithes*, and the like.

And as *this* is here represented by our *Bles-*  
*sed Saviour* to have been the Practice of this  
conceited *Pharisee* in particular; so 'twas the  
known Reproach and distinctive Character  
of the whole Sect of them in general, to  
supercede the Law of God, in the most ma-  
terial parts of it, and to advance any little  
ritual Duty, nay, their own vain Traditions  
and superstitious Institutions above it; to re-  
ject *Mercy and Judgment, and the Love of God*,  
and to cancel the great Obligations of natu-  
ral and reveal'd Religion, in order to main-  
tain the Observance of some petty Usage, and  
to secure the Authority of their own Glosses  
and Interpretations, how false and frivolous  
soever.

And 'tis *this* that our Saviour charges them  
with so often, as the greatest Affront to God  
and his Law that could be, and what he him-  
self, we may plainly observe, censures with a  
more quick and sharp Resentment than he  
usually expresses himself with upon other  
Matters. Well, says our Lord, *has Esaias* Mark 7. 6, 7.  
*prophesied of you Hypocrites, as it is written,* 8, 9.  
*This People honours me with their Lips, but*  
*their Heart is far from me; howbeit in vain*  
*do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the*  
*Commandments of Men.* For laying aside the  
Com-

SERM. XII. *Commandment of God, ye hold the Traditions of Men. And again; Full well ye reject the Commandment of God, that you may hold your own Traditions.*

And what other Principle was at the bottom of this Proceeding, but an intolerable Self-sufficiency and Pride of Spirit? When Men would refuse to submit themselves to God's Judgment and Determination for the Choice of that Worship that would please him best, and would be their own Carvers in Religion; and cull and pick out those Instances as the chief Matter of their Observance, which themselves should best approve of, how different soever from God's own express Dictates in his Word and Law.

And 'tis to the same Leaven of Pride and Hypocrisie in the Hearts of Men, that we must ascribe so much of that Oddness and Singularity in the Business of Religion, that we find in the World at this Day, when some Men are apt to look down upon God's Will and Law as reveal'd in his Word, as but a mean and common Dispensation; and the living up to such, as we call the great Duties of Religion, as Love and Charity, and Brotherly Compliance, and others of that Nature, as but a low and ordinary pitch of Perfection, no more than what every common Christian may arrive at. But as for themselves, they must have a higher Set of Ordinances to distinguish them from their Neighbours about them, some little private Badges of Sanctity to make them shine with a peculiar Grace and Character beyond the vulgar sort of Christians.

And

And from hence when Men come to think it beneath them to excel in the common way of Christianity, and to be truly religious in the Court, and according to the Rules by which the Wisdom of God and Christ design'd they should be, 'tis then very natural for them to run into little Distinctions and Separations both in Judgment and Practice; and *comparing themselves only among themselves*, and judging of Religion by themselves, their own narrow, private, selfish, stingy Opinions, immediately to fancy themselves very nearly arriv'd at Perfection, and to proclaim a distance to the rest of the World in the Language and old Cant of their Forefathers mention'd by the Prophet, *Come not near, I am holier than thou.* Thus *Isa. 65. 5.* the Pharisees, as the Learned tell us, took their very Name from a Word importing Separation; and we are sure they took care to maintain their Character by their Practice; by fencing themselves in with little Bounds of Partition, with sanctimonious Niceties, and idle scrupulous Observations, even to the perfect suppression and choaking of the very Vitals of Religion, more particularly of Charity, the very Height and *Bond of religious Perfection.* When, in the mean time, what, they in their vain Opinion of themselves falsely conceited to have been a more consummate Holiness, an extraordinary Purity and Abstraction of Mind from the Filth and Pollutions of the World, our Blessed Saviour clearly saw, and prov'd to be nothing else but a hollow Wind of Vanity in them, a contemptuous Insolence and Flatulency of

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Soul,



SERM. XII.

 Soul, a Temper the most opposite to what his Laws were intended to introduce, of any in the World; which was the true Reason indeed, why he could not himself escape the most ill-natur'd Reproaches, and Censures of this sort of Men, by reason of the wide difference there was in the *Genius* of his Religion from theirs; his of an open, frank, ingenuous Temper, diffusive of Goodness, and communicative of real Benefits to the Souls and Bodies of Men; condescending and reaching to all their Necessities and Infirmities: Theirs, in the mean time, of a confin'd, narrow, contracted Constitution, that did no good to any body, and less, if possible, to those that had it, and made the largest Pretences to it.

Such was indeed the Humour of this proud Sect, and this is the true Account of their spiritual Condition, as to this first Particular of their prevaricating with the true Worship of God, and substituting their own empty Fancies, the Suggestions of their own Vanity in the room of it; and then putting them out upon the World under the Stamp and Colour of Divine Authority. And 'tis really no more than necessary, that we should be well acquainted with the Character of these Men, that when we so often meet so near a resemblance of their Practice amongst us, at this day, we may be upon our guard, and take care not to be impos'd upon by it. For surely *our Saviour* design'd this *Parable* for an Admonition to all Ages of his Church; and though we have not now the Name and outward Distinction of *Pharisees* amongst us, yet we have reason, perhaps as much as ever, to

complain

complain of the Temper and Manners of that SERMON XII  
 Sect. To what otherwise can we impute that  
 contemptuous haughty Eye, with which some  
 Men look down upon their Brethren, only  
 because they will not come in to their parti-  
 cular Scheme of Thoughts, nor conclude e-  
 very thing to be a necessary Duty of Religion,  
 which they think so, or which their Humour,  
 or Interest, or Prejudice leads them to ob-  
 serve? By which kind of Deportment, under  
 a false, but extraordinary Pretence of Holie-  
 ness, they violate Charity, the maintenance of  
 which, 'tis certain, is of more Consequence,  
 and of far greater Estimation in the Judgment  
 of God himself, than all the outward ritual  
 Services of Worship, tho' commanded by his  
 own Authority; and if so, then of how in-  
 finitely greater Importance, than all the fine  
 Devices which these Men coin for themselves  
 in Religion, and by which they would be di-  
 stinguish'd! For, if what God himself has  
 commanded of a positive Nature holds no pro-  
 portion with the Duties of Charity and Mercy,  
 and the rest of that order, I am sure no fond  
 Observances, of our own chusing, how strict  
 soever we may think our selves for them, or  
 desire to be thought by others, can ever ex-  
 cuse our dispensing with our selves in any of  
 the greater Instances and Points of the Law,  
 such as Humility, we know, has been always  
 thought to have been. And this was the *first*  
*Fault*, for which the *Abarisee* may be suppos'd  
 to have been justly censur'd by our Saviour in  
 my Text: As he was,

*Secondly*, For his vain Dependence on his  
 own Strength and Power, as to the Perform-

SERM. XII. *ance of his Duty; and for attributing it to his own Skill and Industry, which he plainly enough appears to do, by the mighty Value and Applause he gives himself for it. For tho' he begins his Prayer with God, I thank thee, yet we may observe he speaks it in such a Strain of Boasting and Ostentation, that his seeming Acknowledgments to Almighty God were indeed only a ceremonious Preface to introduce his own Vanity, and he would not really have said so much, if he could, almost in common Decency, have said less. For had he been indeed truly thankful, and deeply sensible of his own Deficiency, and that 'twas purely owing to God's Grace and Mercy, if he were any way better than his Fellows, even as perfect as he thought himself; it would then have been impossible for him to have carried it with such disdain as he did to the poor Publicane. And how exalted soever he might otherwise have been in his own Thoughts of himself, he must, upon this only Supposition, have been so far convinc'd of the great Deformity and Unreasonableness of boasting at this rate, as to have forborn it for very shame, more especially in the more immediate Presence of God himself, where we now suppose him. For who, says the Apostle, maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not receiv'd it? Why dost thou glory? that is, how indeed can any Man in common Sense, and in his right Mind do so, under the strength and power of such a Conviction as this would be?*

1 Cor. 4. 7.

And



And therefore when this vain Man thus confidently holds up his Face, and proclaims his own Virtues, in disparagement to his Neighbour, 'tis a plain Sign, if any thing can be, that he was his own *Idol*, and that he took himself for the great *Author and Finisber* of his own Perfections.

And if the same Spirit of Pride, that acted this *Pharisee*, did not still reign in the Hearts of Men, who put on the same Face, and come to worship God with the same Preface of Humility that he did, there would need no more to be said on this Argument, than just to represent his Misbehaviour. But 'tis the Folly of human Nature to presume upon its own strength, in all Ages; and because it does not so plainly feel the Hand that continually supports it, to conclude there is none. And tho' Men are asham'd to confess so much; and if you put the Question to them, will easily acknowledge to you, that they are altogether insufficient for their own Duty, and that without the Grace of God they can do nothing, and that by consequence all Reliance on themselves is fond and impious; yet, when we come more closely to look into their Practice, they betray there a Vanity of this nature, which they will not own in Words. For to hear a Man frequently *vaunting*, and bearing himself above the rest about him, for his great Exactness of Life, and his heroick Performances in Piety; with *himself* almost always in his *Mouth*, and despising and condemning others in comparison with himself, is a sufficient ground for us to conclude, without a breach of Charity, that the vain Man rests

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upon his own Bottom; and whatever he may say, does not really think himself much oblig'd to the Grace of God for what he takes himself to be: If he did, it would make him more silent and humble, and sensible of himself, and then, we are sure, a better Man than now he is.

And can any thing be more absurd and unreasonable, or more plainly discover the wicked Vanity of our Nature, than for a Man, that, God knows, is weak to the last degree of Impotence, and that cannot stand alone a moment, for him to rest thus upon himself as his own Support and Stay? Is he not in so much more danger of falling, for being thus giddy? 'Tis a sure sign, when a Man's Head is so far turn'd, as to set up thus for himself, for an Independency on God's Grace and Assistance, that *balzing* will speedily overtake him, and that a sudden Fall attends him, to his Disgrace as well as his Conviction. For howsoever a Man may impose upon himself by so unreasonable a Conceit of his own spiritual Abilities, yet God sees and judges otherwise of him, and will push him down from this Pinnacle of his Vain-glory to his Ruin. He has declar'd what He himself will do in this Case, and we know what Men are forward enough to do, to resist a proud Man, and to rejoice in his Confusion.

For another Instance of spiritual Pride, we may reflect, *Thirdly*, on the fond Complacency and Self-satisfaction with which this *Pharisee* here expresses himself; which plainly argues that he took a false View of himself, and his own spiritual State; that he saw himself  
only

only on one side, and was by no means truly sensible, as he ought to have been, of the many miserable Defects and Failures of his Life. One would hardly think it possible for a Man, that enquires at all into himself, quite to overlook his own Flaws and Blemishes, and those both of his Nature and Practice: they are so very notorious, that he may almost as soon forget himself to be a Man. And yet we are sufficiently assur'd by this one instance of the *Pharisee*, that a Man exalted with a very high Sense of his spiritual Attainments may do so, one, or both of these two ways; *First*, in that a Man's Eyes may really be so dazzled with gazing perpetually on the Characters of his own imaginary Holiness, that he cannot indeed discover his own Faults; or *Secondly*, tho' he does see them, and own them to be Sins in other Men, yet he will not acknowledge them to be such in himself; and so he easily passes over the great Irregularities of his own Life and Practice, on this vain Presumption, that he is so much the Favourite of the Almighty, that *God will see no Sin* in him, or at least forgive him as easily as he forgives himself. And this, we are sure, is not more, nor worse, than what has been the outrageous Enthusiasm of some Hereticks of old, and Schismaticks of our latter Ages.

Which of these two Reasons really blinded the *Pharisee* in my Text, that he had no truer a sense of his Sins, I shall not here stand exactly to determine; very probably a mixture of both; however, we are sure, the Effect and Consequence was the same. Whereas we find on the contrary, that the truest Chara-



SERM. XI. Ser of a sincere Piety, *accepted* with God, and  *approv'd* by Men, has always been this, that it was *humble*. And indeed without that single Virtue of Humility, whose Savour and Relish must season the whole Frame and Body of our Religion, supposing it possible, that a Man could be furnish'd with all the Graces in Heaven and Earth, if he had *Faith* that he could remove Mountains, and *Hope* as firmly fix'd as the Foundations of the Earth, and *Charity* as diffusive as the Air and Ocean, yet we are sure all his Religion would be vain, and himself deceiv'd, and after all left at too great a distance from God Almighty for him ever to be happy. For *God knows the proud afar off*, that Temper of Soul is utterly inconsistent with any near Union or Communion with him.

*Psal.* 138. 6.

And certainly, if any thing can make us truly humble, a thorow sight and sense of our Sins would not fail to do so. But if we will not open our Eyes to behold them, if we cannot bear to have the gay Scene of our own Perfections, of our own framing, damp'd and sullied by the melancholy view of our Infirmities, lest some disturbance by this means should be given to our imaginary Happiness, what Remedy is there? We may go on to please our selves in our Error; but God knows we are deluded all this while, and we shall be convinc'd too late, to our infinite Surprize and Disappointment, that we have been so.

There is nothing perhaps of a worse and more dangerous Influence upon our spiritual State, than for a Man to be ever dwelling on

his

his own *Perfections*, to be always calculating *the degrees*, and taking the *height* of his *Graces* and *Virtues*, without sometimes turning to the *darker side* of his *Account*, and casting up the *Balance* of his *Sins* and *Failures*. And yet this was the very *Fault*, and *Character*, and *Condition* of the *Pharisee*, whom I have so often introduc'd already, and who is a never-failing *Example* to illustrate any *Point* or *Instance* of *spiritual Pride*. Who, when he addresses himself to the great God, the righteous Judge of the whole Earth, Does he make the least humble mention or confession of his *Sins*? Does he in the least appeal to the *Mercy* of God? or acknowledge his own need of and dependence on it? Does he prostrate himself in the Presence of infinite Holiness and Majesty? or bow down his Soul before the Almighty in acknowledgment of his infinite Excellency, and his own Vileness and Deformity? No: but he stands upon his *Justification*, and insists upon his *Integrity* with God; and seems to draw a *Bill* upon the *Justice* of Heaven, to answer his *Demands* for his great *Services*: At the same time despising the *profane* World about him, and more particularly the humble *Publicane*, that had the Honour to stand so near *his Sanctity*, as a Person of a mean Character in respect of himself; as one that was yet under the *low Dispensation*, and detain'd in the *Porch of Repentance*, and very far from being arriv'd at the *illuminative* way of *Union* and *Acquaintance* with the Almighty, that none but himself, in his Opinion, and a few more, his own *exalted* Order were. In short, the whole *Demeanour* of this *Pharisee*,

SERM. XII. *Pharisee*, as to this great Point in hand, appears so very irregular, and so wholly unformable to the Condition and Circumstances of a sinful Creature, as he was, and as indeed every Man is; that surely 'tis a great deal safer for a Man to have no sense at all of his spiritual Attainments, and so to want even comfortable Reflections on them, than to appear thus elated with a gay Opinion of his own Holiness as this Man did, and under no truer sense of his Infirmities: As a natural Consequence to which ill Temper of Mind in him, he comes, in the

*Fourth and last* place, with a *familiar, arrogant Appeal* to God himself for his Righteousness, which shews us his vain Pretence to Merit, and that he was very far from acknowledging, as he should have done, God's Mercy to be the only ground of Men's Acceptance with him.

If a Man were really in a State of Innocence, and as perfect in his Nature as God design'd, and made him; yet a just Distance, and awful Reverence, in the Presence of the great and glorious Majesty of Heaven and Earth, might very well become him as a Creature, out of a deep Sense and Acknowledgment of a *Being* so far above him, and of Perfections infinite and inconceivable, between which, and his own, there is no Proportion.

But to see not only a Man, but a wretched Sinner, stand upon Terms with the God of Purity, and with a prophane and rude Insolence to break in upon that Holiness and Majesty, which is so far retir'd above the ways  
of



of Men, and so infinitely farther yet remote *and separate from Sinners*, and that too, with a false and groundless Claim to the Divine Favour, is, such a Shock to the Apprehension of a wise and humble Man, that nothing can be more; and argues the Person guilty of it, to the utmost degree, ignorant of God's Nature and his own.

And yet of such a levelling Nature is Pride to all that is above it, that even the *first Man* himself, in the *Robe* of his original *Innocence*, would never have dar'd to approach the *Holy Presence* with so little Address and Preparation, or have made his Suit at the Throne of infinite Majesty in Terms of such height and confidence, as this haughty Sinner does. He stood and pray'd thus with himself, *God, I thank thee*, and so on. No Acknowledgments, we see, of God's supereminent Glory in these Words, nor of his own Dependence on his Mercy; he rather seems to challenge the Justice of Heaven for his perfect Righteousness, and the Rewards of it. And by so doing flurs and disparages that one *beloved* Attribute of God, which is the only ground of Hopes and Refuge for a Sinner, and provokes another, his Justice, to his own Confusion. And how far this Practice of the insolent *Pharisee* has been imitated by the wild *Hereticks* of old, and the more *illuminated Sectaries* of the later Ages; for the former I appeal to the Histories of the Primitive Church, and for the latter, only to the sam'd Eloquence of a neighbouring Country, and to the blind enthusiastick Effusions, and familiar Rants of some even amongst our own People,

Scotch Presbyterian Eloquence.

And

SERM. XII.

*And thus far I have endeavour'd to represent the great Irregularity and Unsuitableness of the Pharisee's Behaviour towards Almighty God; I shall now consider him, in the second and last place, with respect to other Men, and more particularly his more immediate Neighbour, and Companion, the humble Publicane.*

And here we are likewise to bring in our Charge against him upon a threefold Account.

*First*, In that he appears well pleas'd, and seems to rejoice, and take his own Satisfaction in the Sins and Infirmities of other Men.

*Secondly*, He compares his own Perfections with their Faults, which is a very unreasonable, and unrighteous way of Proceeding.

And from thence he comes in the *Third* Place thus foolishly to despise others, and so vainly and arrogantly to applaud himself.

And *First*, He appears well pleas'd, and seems to rejoice, and take his own Satisfaction in the Sins and Infirmities of other Men. Which is indeed but a natural Consequence of Pride, where-ever 'tis found, or upon whatsoever Subject 'tis engag'd. For since a proud Man cannot bear an Equal, his very Principles oblige him to *sink* others as far as he can below himself, and then his Happiness must lie in seeing them so.

But spiritual Pride is the more intolerable in this Point than any other, because the Sins and Errors of other Men are so far in Reason and Charity from being Matter of our Joy and Triumph, that if we have the least  
Regard

Regard either to the Good of Men, or the Glory of God, they must necessarily prove the greatest Occasions of our Concern and Trouble. When we see Men lose and undo themselves in that which is their last and truest Interest, when they disgrace their Reason, and disparage their Nature, and run themselves upon inevitable Ruin; he, that can take delight in such a dismal View as this, and hug himself in his own Security and Advantage over them, is so far from being a good Man, whatever he may pretend to be, that he has not the first Principles, nor common Tenderness of human Nature within him. And yet we see this was the very Temper and Carriage of this proud Pharisee, and indeed is still of all those that agree in Character and Principles with him. *God, I thank thee,* says he, *that I am not as other men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publicane;* as much as to say, I thank God that other Men are more wicked and greater Sinners than my self; and can any thing be more intolerable? How very different is this Temper and Behaviour from that of the Royal Psalmist, *Rivers of waters run down mine Eyes,* says he, *because they keep not thy Law.* Psal. 119. 139.

If there be no Religion without Charity, and if Charity can never in the least consist with this Pharisaical Humour, as 'tis certain it cannot, why then a spiritually proud Man is the farthest from being truly religious of any Man in the World, because he is at the greatest Remove from Charity, in that, which is the chiefest Property of it, laid down by the



SERMON the Apostle himself, *that he rejoiceth not in his*  
*iniquity, but rejoiceth in the Truth.* It does  
 1 Cor. 13. 6. not insult and triumph upon seeing Wicked-

ness and Error thrive and prosper in the World, in order to have it self more conspicuous, but is pleas'd to behold the Success of Religion and Truth, and glad to find others more eminent in Perfection than it self. But now spiritual Pride feeds it self upon the Corruptions of Men, and indulges its own Satisfaction at the Expence of another's Happiness, and is never better pleas'd than when other Men have the least Reason to be so. So that if it were possible a Man of this Humour would appropriate God Almighty, and engross Heaven to himself, since he cannot be so happy, but when singular and alone in his Enjoyments. And even the Communion of the Saints in Light would be but a Diminution of his Bliss; which is one of the surest Arguments that can be, that he is, to the last Degree, unqualify'd for that heavenly State, and without Amendment shall be for ever excluded from it.

Another very excellent Quality in this Man, which shews us his *Wisdom*, as well as his *Worth*, is,

Secondly, *This*, that he makes it his Business to compare himself, and his own Perfections, with other Mens Faults and Misbehaviour, which is a very unequal, and unrighteous way of Proceeding. And by this means he cannot fail to answer his own Desires, and to stretch and exalt himself beyond all Proportion of his just Size and Merit,

ris, and to sink and depress his Neighbour as low as he could wish. But, in God's Name, where is the Equity of this way of Dealing? If thou must needs compare thy self with thy Neighbour, let thy Comparison be form'd upon the square with him, and set his Character by thy own, with all his *Lights* as well as *Shades* about him. Hast thou great Virtues in thee? so has he, though perhaps of a little *different*, yet not of a less *excellent* Nature than thine own. And if he has Faults and Blemishes in him, so hast thou; and it may be not the *less*, because thou thinkest so. Thou perhaps art strict, and devout, and retir'd, and abstracted in the Course of thy Life, and takest care only of thy self: He is more open, and free, and cheerful, employ'd chiefly in doing good to others, and engag'd in the Hurry and Business of an active Life, which though it be less satisfactory to himself, it may be, is not less acceptable to God, and is much more beneficial to Men. Thou perhaps art abstinent, and deniest thy self the Pleasures of Life, which thou mightest lawfully enjoy: He in the meantime is temperate, and takes the Liberty which God and Nature allow him within due Bounds, and with a thankful Heart. Thou art *devout*, he is more *charitable*: Thou art more *mortified*, he is less *conformist*. —

If we would always take this Method of adjusting the Difference there is between us and our Neighbour, this would keep down the unnatural Risings of our Pride against him, and we should begin to see that another Man

SERMON XII. Man may have something really valuable in him, as well as our selves. But if we are resolv'd to see no Good in our Neighbour, and are not content unless our *Light* and Perfections *shine* only upon his *Darkness*, 'tis no Wonder they appear much larger to us, than really they are, and that we are utterly incapable of ever coming to a truer Sense of our Condition. The Consequence of which must necessarily be, what was here the Practice of the Pharisee, that we shall come, in the

*Third and Last Place*, most foolishly to *despise* others, and vainly and arrogantly to *applaud* our selves: Which was the very Sum and finishing Stroke of his Character, and will be the very Completion of our Pride and Folly.

But I have made so many Reflections already on this Branch of my Subject, in the several Parts of my former Discourse, that to insist upon it here, would be only to trouble you and my self with needless Repetitions. Besides, the whole Progress of the Parable it self is so very full and express, and lively to this Purpose, that nothing can be like it. I shall recommend a due Perusal of that therefore to your Care, and hope it will prove effectual, and prevail with us all to endeavour after the contrary *Grace* to Pride, the lovely Virtue of Humility, and in the Language of the holy Apostle, that we be indeed *clothed with Humility*; it being the Habit that certainly becomes us best, as we are sinful Men, and as we are Christians.

1 Pet. 5. 5.

*Now*



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Now to the High and Lofly One that inhabits Eternity, and that dwells in the high and holy Place; with him also that is of a contrite and a humble Spirit; to our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, the great Master and Pattern of Humility; together with the Blessed Spirit, be all Glory and Praise, and Honour ascribed by Men and Angels, now and for evermore. Amen.

S E R M O N

UNIVERSITY.

In January, 1711.

I COR. VIII.

And if any Man think that he knoweth  
any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as  
ought to know  
The  
as if he deny'd there was any such  
thing as real knowledge attainable  
in matters of Religion: For there are cor-  
ruptions of our Understanding, and if any  
thing we do believe our inward Testimony  
is that of such an infinite Moment and Im-  
portance to our Happiness, both here and  
here.

*The Folly and Danger of being conceited  
of our Spiritual Knowledge.*

A

# S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

## UNIVERSITY,

In January, 17<sup>th</sup>.

1 COR. VIII. 2.

*And if any Man think that he knoweth  
any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as  
he ought to know.*

**W**E are by no Means so to understand these Words of the *Apostle*, as if he deny'd there was any such thing as real Knowledge attainable in Matters of Religion: For these are certainly the most proper and noble Entertainments of our Understanding, and, if any thing can do so, deserve our utmost Enquiries, as being of such an infinite Moment and Importance to our Happiness, both here and here-

hereafter, throughout the whole Extent and Continuance of our Being. Nor can we suppose that the *Apôlle*, whatever else he might design to reprove in the Words of my Text, could ever intend by them to lay so severe an Imjunction upon Men, that under all their Attainments in true Knowledge, and when they should have made such considerable Progress in it, that their *profiting must appear to all* 1 Tim. 4. 15. men, that they themselves in the mean time should be the only Persons quite insensible, and unapprehensive of their own Perfections. To suppose the former Interpretation would be quite to overthrow the Design of God's own Revelation of himself, and his Truth to the World, which was certainly to guide and instruct Mankind in that Knowledge, which was in it self most valuable, and most pertinent and necessary for them to be inform'd in; and that must certainly suppose them capable of being so, otherwise that Discovery and Revelation must have been originally vain and to no purpose; which, as proceeding from God's Wisdom and Goodness, we cannot, without the greatest Impiety, suppose to have been so. Nor can we, on the other hand, admit of any such Exposition of these Words, which should require a perfect Ignorance and Insensibility in Men of their own Progress and Acquisitions in the Knowledge of *Spiritual* Matters; because that contradicts the very first Principles and Operations of our Minds, which, as they are capable of Reflection, may be conscious of their own Endowments without blame.



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But then, though the *Apostle* will not deny that there is such a thing as a true and excellent Knowledge to be acquir'd in our religious Contemplations, and in the Verse before my Text owns some Mens actual Possession of it, and that Men themselves too may be sensible of it without Sin; *For we know*, says he, *that we all have Knowledge*; so that he could never be suppos'd in the Words of the Text to condemn all Self-consciousness in our intellectual Improvements; yet there is certainly one kind of Reflection on them, and an inward Demeanour towards, and an Opinion of our selves upon that score, which is a just matter of the *Apostle's* blame, and not be allow'd either by the Rules of Reason or Religion. And *that* was the proper Sense of these Words which St. Paul intended, and which it shall be my present Business to explain.

A fond and vain Admiration of our selves then upon the account of our greater Knowledge, and a Neglect and Contempt of our Neighbours, comparing them with our selves in Point of spiritual Understanding, is what the *Apostle* justly censures in these Words, *If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know*; that is, if a Man entertain such a vain Conceit of his Knowledge in Religion, as to pride himself upon it, and to behave himself contemptuously, and insolently towards other Men upon that account, he is quite ignorant of the true Nature and Design of all religious Knowledge, which is indeed not to make Men vain and haughty, but the more truly and deeply

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deeply sensible of their Duty, and the better able and more readily inclin'd to practise it, both towards God, themselves, and towards all Men.

I need not consider the present and immediate Occasion upon which these Words are here brought in by the *Apostle*, in this his Discourse to the *Corinthians*, which yet 'twere easie to explain; I shall chuse rather to treat of them as a single independent Sentence, in a more unrestrain'd and general Sense; and so taken, they express to us such Doctrines, and put us in Mind of such Truths as may be of very useful Importance towards the right Government of our Minds and Behaviour, both in the Pursuit, and under the Attainment of spiritual Knowledge.

As, *First*, That whatsoever our Perfection in this sort of Knowledge may be, which yet is certainly the best in the World, yet a vain and arrogant Conceit and Admiration of our selves upon it, is both unreasonable, and sinful, upon several Accounts. If a Man *think* that he knows any thing, says the *Apostle*, implying that he ought not indeed to think so.

*Secondly*, To think so highly of our selves on the score of our greater Knowledge, is full of dangerous Consequences to our Christian Practice, which is or ought to be matter of our greater Concern and Care than any thing else. *He knows nothing yet as he ought to know*; which implies, that such an Opinion of Knowledge as *this*, may very much mislead us.

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And, *First*, I shall consider that whatever our Attainments in Spiritual Knowledge may be either really in themselves, or comparatively above other Mens; yet a fond, vain and arrogant Conceit and Admiration of our selves upon them is unreasonable and sinful, and that for several Reasons.

*First*, Because our utmost reach of Knowledge in things is, and always must be, so long as we live in this World, so very imperfect.

*Secondly*, Let it be what it will, 'tis yet the mere Gift of God's Free Grace and Bounty, in the Revelation of himself by his Word without, and the Assistance and Inspirations of his Holy Spirit within our Minds, and therefore to presume and vaunt our selves upon it, is a great Sin, because it implies we vainly ascribe it to our selves.

*Thirdly*, 'Tis not what God design'd we should ever rest in, as our End and Happiness; but use it as a Means only in order to the better Regulation of our Practice: And therefore it cannot deserve our highest Esteem.

In the *First* Place then 'tis extremely vain, and to the last degree unreasonable, to admire and boast our selves upon our religious Knowledge, because the utmost reach of it, in this Life, must be always so very imperfect. We know but in part, and we prophesie in part. The utmost Force of our Mind, assisted even by those supernatural Discoveries that God has been pleas'd to vouchsafe us, in our present State, can enter but a very little way into those Divine and noble Theories, that are reserv'd  
for



for our Happiness hereafter. Not that we ought to look upon this as any Reflection upon the Goodness of God, that he has not let us farther into the Treasures of *unsearchable Wisdom*, in this World, to a more close and intimate view of his *Heavenly Glories*; because indeed the present State of our weak Nature, and the Narrowness of our Capacity would by no means admit of it: So far as they would, and as far as was necessary to direct us to our final Happiness, so far he has indeed open'd himself to us in the merciful Revelations of his *Word*.

And yet, through the Perverseness and Blindness of our Minds, contracted by our Sin and Folly, how dim are our Perceptions even of these necessary Truths, which we might and ought to know better; and how perplex'd and intangled is very often our Discernment of those things, in which our Duty and Practice are more immediately concern'd! So that when we go off never so little from the general Rules of Duty, which, we think, lie clear enough before us, and come to examine the nature of our particular Actions, as they are invest'd with numerous and intricate Circumstances, where is the Man of so clear a Head, that can give himself a perfect Satisfaction in Cases without number, that yet so closely concern his Life and Conduct! How few Cases are there, even in *Divinity* it self, that are so well resolv'd by the Learning and Skill of its *Professors*, that a Man's Mind can repose it self on them without desire of farther Satisfaction! Which is a very severe Argument how much the

SER. II. III. Generalities of Mankind are at a loss, and puzzled to find their Duty.

And what a vain thing is it then that a Man should boast himself upon his Knowledge, when his Ignorance is ten thousand fold, and such tracts of Wisdom lie beyond his view, which he must never expect to arrive at, by his utmost Researches! To one Discovery we can make, either in the Nature and Attributes of God, or our own infinite Obligations to him, that which is *hidden from us cannot be number'd*; and if he should enter into scrutiny with the Wisest of us all, we could not answer him to one of a thousand; which ought to be enough to convince us that a perfect State of Wisdom was never design'd for our Portion here; and that we can't so much as aim at it without the greatest Ignorance both of our Nature and Abilities; than which surely there can be no greater Instance of our Folly. *Where then is Wisdom!* to be found, and *where is the place of Understanding!* The sea says, *it is not in me*, and the depth says, *it is not in me*. And if Man desires to know any thing of it, 'tis to walk humbly before his God, and his Neighbour, upon a thorow Sense and Conviction of his own Ignorance.

Let a Man but consider the Controversies of his own Time, and look over the perpetual Jarrs and Inconsistencies of even the Wisest and most Learned Men, in Matters of religious Doctrine it self, which yet are of the highest Concernment to be rightly stated, and he will quickly be convinc'd of the Weakness of human Reason, assisted with all the Advantages

Advantages of *Revelation*. Men differ so widely from each other, and very often from themselves, in determining these Matters of highest Moment, that though a Desire of Truth may be in Charity be presum'd to have been the Ground and Motive to all their Enquiries, yet nothing seems less to be the Issue of them all, than the Discovery of Truth it self.

And therefore we may observe, that those Men themselves, who have most undergone the fatigue, and toil in the Pursuit of Knowledge, are ever apt to assume the least to themselves, and most tender and candid in Interpreting the Opinions, and passing by the Errors and Infirmities of other Men: Because they are well convinc'd, that the general and unavoidable Weakness of our Nature lays us perpetually open to Mistakes and Ignorance, and that it must be a violent strain upon Nature, to set us in any Measure above these Imperfections, or to recover us from under them. So that for a Man to triumph and insult upon the Ignorance and Inadvertence of the World about him, in a vain Confidence of his own great Accomplishments, in the Discoveries of true Knowledge, is a Practice not more offensive to common Modesty, than 'tis a plain Conviction of the Vanity of his own Pretences.

'Tis the Observation of a very \* Learned \* Lord Bacon's Person, and one perhaps that was as well experienced in human Nature as any Man in these latter Ages, That Confidence is generally the result of Ignorance, and that no Men have made such high Professions of, and put in such bold and peremptory Claims to Learning and Science,



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Science, as those that have been really most Empty, and but Smatterers in what they would be thought most perfectly to comprehend. And there is this Reason to be given for it; because the Perception of some of the first Principles in a Science may be easie and obvious, whilst Men who care not to be at the Pains of going farther, or being vainly conceited of the Pregnancies of their own Minds, imagine they have no need to do so; immediately, and hastily conclude that all the rest is as plain and open, as what they think they know already, and so presently resolve with themselves, that they can easily account for what they never yet indeed consider'd. Whereas a wiser and more disciplin'd Understanding is aware before-hand, that there may arise Difficulties not so easily to be reconcil'd to those Principles, and therefore such Men are more reserv'd and modest both in their Proceedings, and their Professions.

I need not apply this general account of an arrogant forward Presumption on our Knowledge, to Matters of Religion. Every one can do it for me, from the Instances, that he is, or may be acquainted with himself. For who are those Men amongst us that raise themselves so far above the rest of their Brethren in their own Opinions, and dare confront the Authority of the Church in all Ages, and of our own Sacred Order at present, in their presumptuous handling the chief Articles of our Faith? Who are they? but those who by a perpetual gazing on their own Attainments, and a partial Fondness for their own Judgments, have wrought themselves

into

into an Opinion as best of, I know not what secret Illumination, as if they were as well qualified to make new Discoveries in the *Spiritual* World, as they think they may have done in the *Natural* one. What we may lawfully think of these Men, we may learn from the Account given us of some of their Predecessors, the *Gnosticks*, that they comparing themselves amongst themselves, and judging of themselves by themselves are not Wise, but so far from it, that whilst they are soaring so high in their own vain Imaginations, they forget the first Truths and Principles of Religion, that lie before them; and so fall below the Reason and Christianity of plain and vulgar Men.

But, *Secondly*, were our *Spiritual Knowledge* more perfect than we have seen it is, even as consummate and absolute as some Men themselves are willing to believe it, yet we should consider that 'tis all the Gift of God's Grace, and hints from his free Discoveries and *Revelations* of himself to the World, without which, we could hardly have known any thing either of the *Divine Nature*, or our own Duty; and therefore it can be no Reason for our Pride.

There needs no other Evidence of this, than to look back upon the Darkness and Confusion in the *Old Heathen World*, where all the Light, that could be struck out, in so many Ages, by the utmost Pains of Men, of the greatest Abilities, amounted to little more than a faint Suspicion of some religious Truths; which because they were not able by the Force of natural Reason clearly to prove, they

they did not think themselves under any great  
 Obligation of believing. The Disputes about  
 the Nature of their Gods, and the Immorta-  
 lity of Men's Souls, which are the two main  
 Hinges of Religion, and which are the Points  
 upon which the *Gentile Philosophy* was perpe-  
 tually beating, as being apprehended of the  
 greatest consequence to the Government of  
 Men's Lives, yet were these never clear'd up  
 to any tolerable advantage, or explain'd upon  
 such Principles of Reason, as could justify a  
 Man's firm Assent and Adherence to them.  
 When the Controversie was as fully stated as  
 it could be, and the Arguments drawn up and  
 represented on every side, as far as the finest  
 Wits of Men could possibly go; What was  
 the Issue after all, or what great Effect was  
 produc'd and left upon the Minds of the Audi-  
 tors? Why no more than this; they were ei-  
 ther still the worse entangled in Doubts and  
 Difficulties, which they knew not how to  
 solve; or, at best, were inclin'd to think one  
 Part of the Question a little more probable  
 than the other; but which was the right, lay  
 beyond the utmost Skill of human Reason to  
 determine.

If we have a Mind then to be thoroughly  
 convinc'd of the Shallowness and Vanity of  
 our own Reason, when left to it self to make  
 discoveries in *Religion*, without the Assistance  
 of *God's enlightning Grace*, the Primitive  
 State of the World will inform us, when  
 Darkness thus cover'd the Earth, and gross  
 Darkness the People. And yet this is all we  
 have the least Pretence to value our selves  
 upon, because 'tis indeed all we can properly  
 call



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call our own. The rest is purely from the **SERMON XIII.**  
merciful Dispensation of God to Men, and  
freely descends upon us *from the Father of* James. 1. 17.  
*Lights, from whom it deriv'd every good, and*  
*every perfect Gift.* But this is so far from be-  
ing Matter of our Pride and Arrogance, that  
'tis one of the best Reasons in the World for  
our Humility, and our most grateful Acknow-  
ledgments to our Divine Benefactor. For if  
we have nothing really valuable in our Know-  
ledge of Religion, but what we have receiv'd  
from above, why then do we, or how can  
*we glory, as if we had not receiv'd it?* This one  
Consideration would effectually quell the ri-  
sings of our Pride, because it would so evi-  
dently convince us of the Unreasonableness of  
it, and of the extremest Folly of ever giving  
it room, or entertainment in our Thoughts.

A Third Reason, to prevent our taking up  
too high and fond an Opinion of our spiritual  
Knowledge, is the Consideration that God ne-  
ver design'd we should rest in it, or make it  
our chief End and Happiness, but directs it  
all, in Order to the right Government of our  
Practice. *If ye know these things, says our* John 13. 17.  
*Blessed Lord, happy are ye if ye do them.* He  
makes the Practice of our Duty, we see, the  
great Point he aim'd at in his teaching the  
World, and the Doctrine it self no farther be-  
neficial, than as it was directed to, and made  
to terminate in that Practice. And there is  
this Reason to be assign'd for his doing so,  
because 'tis not Knowledge, even in the high-  
est Perfection, and Excellency of it, that can  
make us Happy: It is the right Order and  
Government of our Wills and Affections in  
con-

SERMON XIII conformity to the Will of God, which is the business of our Duty: that is able to do better. And without this, the greater Wisdom, and more perfect Knowledge, will serve only as Instruments of Torment to us, to enhance the Pain, and to set home the Reflections on our Misery the deeper.

Much greater measures of Knowledge and Wisdom, than we can possibly apprehend, or arrive at in this World, we have good reason to think, may be found in those Natures, which we know at the same time are miserable to the last extremity. The fallen Angels, those accursed Spirits, do retain their Angelic Nature, tho' in Pain; and for that Reason, are very probably endued with a more piercing, sharp Intelligence, than any Mortal Man can pretend to be, and understand the application of Means to Ends, much better than the wisest Philosopher. And yet they continue forever in the most dismal state of Misery, with all their inward Light and Knowledge, they are confin'd to the sad Condition, and deliver'd under the Chains, of Eternal Darkness. No finer Thoughts or sublime Speculations can soothe or alleviate their Pain, or drive the gnawings of that Worm that never dies within their Consciences. So that a very high degree of Perfection in Knowledge may be consistent, we see, with the extremest Misery: a sure Argument that God never design'd Knowledge for our last and truest Happiness: Because Happiness and Misery are never reconcilable.

Shall we then set such an inordinate Value upon our Knowledge, even of other Truths and

and Myſteries of Religion it ſelf, is to com-  
mit Irregularities for its ſake, and forfeit that  
Integrity of our Wills which we are ſure is  
the only thing that can make us happy? And  
yet this we do, when we exalt Knowledge  
above its proper Order, and look upon it, as  
the main Ingredient of our Bleſs, and purſue  
it with ſuch degrees of Eagernels, very often  
to the neglect of our Practice, which is  
much beyond what the juſt State and propor-  
tion of Reason or Religion will allow us.

'Twas the vain Affectation of Knowledge,  
and that of Good and Evil too, it ſeems, a  
Religious Knowledge, that threw down our  
firſt Father from his Primitive State of Hap-  
pineſs. Whiſt he ventur'd for its ſake to vio-  
late the Will of his Creator, and to forfeit his  
own Innocence, and ſo ſuſtain'd the loſs of a  
Good that was infinitely greater for the ſake  
of a leſs.

I don't deſign any Part of this Diſcourſe  
as a Diſparagement to any ſort of true and real  
Knowledge, and leaſt of all to that which is  
Religion, which, when directed to its proper  
End, is ſo highly instrumental to our Hap-  
pineſs. But as good as it is, it may be miſ-  
apply'd, and perverted, and we are ſure it is  
ſo, when advanc'd in our Opinion above its  
juſt Size and Value. Which may oftentimes  
prove an Occaſion of drawing off our Minds  
from our more immediate Duty, and from  
theſe more important Purpoſes of our being  
plac'd, and living in this preſent ſtate of Trial  
in this World, which are to rectifie our Wills,  
and reform our deprav'd Nature to an Obe-  
dience to the Laws and Will of God, upon  
whoſe



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whose Disposal, according to our Behaviour, we are sure our eternal State depends. So far indeed as our *Spiritual Knowledge* serves to the better Government of our Lives; as long as the Virtue and Influence of it descends upon our Wills and Affections, and sets them right; so far 'tis preferable to every thing else in the World, but religious Obedience it self, which is the very End to which it was design'd; and therefore Knowledge must always yield to Practice, as the Means must always do to the proper and ultimate End to which they are directed. But indeed without such an Ordination and Tendency to this great End, the Conduct of our Practice, our Knowledge, how refin'd and subtile soever it may be, though in *Divinity* it self, is nothing but Emptiness and Fume, the Food and Support of Vanity. While it thus proves useless and stays only in the Head, 'tis like dry Clouds without Rain, wandring only in the upper Regions, but distills no sweet Influence to replenish the Heart, and to make it bring forth, and fructify in the Course of a religious and virtuous Conversation.

And thus I have endeavour'd to represent, both the Disadvantages, and the real Use of our Knowledge in matters of *Religion*; and 'tis plain, that take it which way we will, 'tis very far from being an Argument for our Self-esteem and Vanity; not upon the two former Considerations, of its being so very imperfect, and depending upon *God's* free *Grace* for any thing that is truly valuable in it; nor yet upon the last Account, because it is only a Means to a farther End, that great End of  
ordering

ordering a-right our Life and Practice, in the **SERM. XIII.**  
business of our Duty.

I shall now proceed to a fuller Confirmation of this Argument, by shewing, in the *second place*, that a high and vain Conceit of our Attainments in spiritual Knowledge is full of dangerous Consequences to our *Christian Practice*, which ought to be the matter of our greatest Care; and which, as I have shewn already, was intended by Almighty God to be the true scope and aim of all our Knowledge.

The *Apostle* could not have pass'd a greater Slight upon *Knowledge*, in comparison with Practice, than when he tells us, in the Verse immediately before my Text, that *Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifieth*: Not that our more perfect, and thorow Insight into the Nature and Doctrines of *Religion*, is, in its own natural tendency, apt to have this effect upon the Minds of Men; for if it were, our Knowledge would then be culpable in it self, and Ignorance justly espous'd as the truest friend to *Devotion*: But 'tis by reason of the Corruption of our Nature, 'tis from the Weakness of our Heads, and the Perverseness of our Wills, that Knowledge, which is otherwise one of the greatest Perfections of human Nature, comes by Accident to have such a fatal and mischievous Influence. 'Tis not true Knowledge it self, but the Mistakes of Men, and their wrong Opinions about it, when they set an inordinate Value upon it, and don't pursue it according to its proper Intention, that renders it a noxious Quality, and liable to this severe Censure of the *Apostle*. And that it may sometimes deserve to be

SERM. XIII. treated so ill, when 'tis so far perverted from its proper use, will appear from these *three* following Considerations.

*First*, That a high Conceit of their Knowledge is apt to make Men look down on the Practice of Religion, as but a mean and low Attainment.

*Secondly*, 'Tis apt to incline Men to entertain too great a Dependence on their own Understanding, which is one of the main Fountains of Error, and of those Innovations and Corruptions in Religion which we find.

*Thirdly*, An over-weening Opinion of our *Spiritual* Wisdom, is directly opposite to *Humility*, that great and fundamental Virtue, in regard to our selves, and not so well consistent with *Charity*, a Duty of the highest Concernment in our Practice towards others.

And, *First*, I shall shew that a high Conceit of their Knowledge is apt to make Men look down upon the Practice of Religion, as but a mean and low Attainment.

It has been the Complaint of former Ages, and we may find it justified by our own Experience, that Men of the profoundest Heads, and who have been suppos'd best skill'd in the sublime Mysteries and disputable Points of *Religion*, have not been always found the exactest in their Lives and Manners; and have very often, the more is the Pity, sunk below the Integrity and Innocence of a mean illiterate *Christian*. Upon which account, as their Guilt was certainly the greater, so their Condemnation, without Repentance, must have been the heavier; because their more perfect Information, as it carried in it the stricter

Obliga-



Obligations to Obedience, it did likewise by SERM. XIII.  
 consequence the higher Aggravations of Neglect. And upon this ground 'tis, that Saint *James* gives us this good Advice, *My Brethren, be not many Masters*; that is, don't insist upon your higher Improvements in the Doctrines of Religion; *knowing that we shall receive the greater Condemnation*; (i. e.) we are more liable to Judgment and Severity our selves from the Hands of God, by how much we are more ready and forward to tax the Ignorance, and censure the Faults and Misbehaviour of other Men. And yet, as great a Fault as this is, and ought to be esteem'd, a Pretence to extraordinary Illumination, and that Vanity and Insolence of Soul that attends too great an Opinion of our Knowledge in *spiritual* Matters, certainly renders Men the more liable to this Sin, tho' it leaves them at the same time the less excusable.

So that there is indeed a sort of Temperance to be observ'd in our Desires, and Esteem of Knowledge, as well as there is in the Matter of our sensual Appetites. And he that transcends the Bounds of this, breeds a sort of Indigestion in his Mind, and many times offends to worse Consequence, and to the greater Prejudice of his Virtue, than if he should sometimes surcharge himself in pursuit of the Pleasures of Voluptuousness and Sensuality; which, next to *Spiritual Pride*, is a Sin to be most abhorr'd, upon the account of its large and wicked Influence.

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Nay, these very gross Sins themselves, that I mention'd, are not the least, that Men sublim'd into a higher Opinion, and exalted with a towering Conceit of their spiritual Knowledge and Perfections, have sometimes fallen. Who more refin'd and mysterious in their Speculations of Religion than the *Gnosticks* in their own false Opinions? and yet they fell into the grossest Sins, and wallow'd in all the Impurities of a sensual Life, upon this vain Presumption, that their more *sublim'd* Knowledge would secure them at last, and that God would see no Sin in the Practice of those, who were so familiar with his Secrets, as they pretended to be, so spiritualiz'd in their Contemplation of his Nature and Perfections. But I need not go so far back as to the *Gnosticks*, for an Instance to confirm my present Argument; we have Men amongst our selves, who lay claim to a higher Dispensation of *Spiritual Wisdom*, than the rest of their Brethren; I mean the illuminated Sectaries of our own Age, as they pretend themselves to be; who yet sometimes don't refuse to descend to the foulest Practices, and are often found tripping in the most substantial Points of common Honesty. It is only just necessary for me to mention these Men.

And so I pass to the *Second Particular* under this Head, which is, to shew that too high a Conceit of our Knowledge in the Affairs of Religion is offensive to our *Christian Practice*, upon this Account likewise; because it is apt to make Men set up for themselves, and to conceive too great a Dependence and

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Presumption on their own Understandings, SERM. XII  
which, we know is one of the great Springs  
and Fountains of Error and Heresie, the  
main Cause of Innovations, and corrupt O-  
pinions in Religion.

It has been sometimes made a Question of  
Surprize, how some Men, whose Lives in  
the main have been regular enough, and that  
could not be tax'd with any open and noto-  
rious Breach in Point of Manners, could yet  
fall into such desperate and dangerous Errors  
in Matters of *Faith* and *Doctrine* as they did.  
The \*great Patron of Atheistical Philosophy,  
that so lately spread his Poison in our own  
Nation, † if we may believe the Accounts gi-  
ven of his Life and Behaviour, was a Man of  
no foul and open Miscalriages in his Practice,  
observable above those of ordinary Men: And  
so the Ancient *Hereticks*, that oppos'd and  
corrupted Religion in the early Days of  
*Christianity*, were Men rather remarkable for  
Strictness and Severity of Life; and yet both  
those of our own Time, and the others, have  
committed such wide Breaches and Violati-  
ons in the Doctrines of *Faith*, as seem at first  
Sight hardly to be accounted for, from Men  
of so unblameable a Carriage.

But if we consider more attentively we  
shall find, that this *Root of Bitterness*, that  
so defil'd the *Minds* and *Consciences* of these  
Men, and gave them so perverse and repro-  
bate a Turn from the Truth and Simplicity  
of Religion, lay a great deal deeper; beyond

\* Hobbes. † Dr. Kennet's Account at the End of his Fam.  
Sermon on the Duke of Devon.



SERM. XIII. the common View, in the inward Bent and Temper of their Souls; and 'twas indeed their Pride of their own Judgment and Opinion; a Sin, which tho' it does not fall under the Eyes of Men so much, nor appear in such gross and foul Colours as the Sins of the Flesh, Intemperance and Sensuality; yet has as malignant an Influence, and perhaps a worse, towards the corrupting of Mens Principles, than those Sins may ordinarily have. A Pride of a Man's own Abilities of Learning and Judgement, and a partial Fondness for his own Conceits, will make a Man a Heretick, as soon as any other Principle. A Quickness of Parts to give a new Turn and Interpretation to the Doctrines of *Religion*, and a Sagacity to draw up a new fresh seemingly consistent Scheme of Opinions, and a consequent Admiration of a Man's self on this account, have very often engag'd Men of Morals and Sobriety enough, in a *Shipwrack concerning their Faith*. And when a Man has once gone on for some time in Errour of this kind, the Applause, that he is apt to give himself for it, and to receive from others, confirms him still the more by Degrees, 'till he comes to settle himself at last in a downright Persuasion of those Errors, which he only entertain'd, and propos'd at first as something probable.

This is the Account the Great \**Mr. Hooker* gives of the Riseness and Exuberance of *Heretical* Opinions in the *Eastern Church*, above whatever the *Western* appear'd to be trou-

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\**Eccles. Polit. Book 5.*

bled with: That the *Greeks* were ever a People addicted to new Opinions, and had a very high Conceit of, and a wonderful Affection for their own Quirks and Inventions, especially in the Affairs of Religion: And when they once hit upon a new Conceit, how strange, and *Unorthodox* soever, the great Easiness and Volubility of their Language serv'd them to recommend it as plausible to others; which is the Reason he gives for the wide, and quick spreading of *Arianism*, over the whole Face of the *Greek Church*.

The way then to be secure from the most dangerous and destructive Errors, is to be truly and sincerely humble in our own Opinions, not to think of *our selves more highly than we ought*; not to be full of our selves, and our own Sufficiency; not to do, as the manner of too many spiritualiz'd and conceited Persons is, to set up their own private Judgment in Opposition to the whole *Church of God*, and the Authority of so many wise and good Men that have gone before us: As if every thing were the more liable to Suspicion, meerly for this Reason, because others had believ'd it; or as if our Ancestors had all combin'd to deceive us in Matters of the greatest Moment.

There is Room enough for Men not to make themselves liable to the Objection of following with an implicit Faith, without setting up themselves as the only Standards of Truth, the great Oracles of *Faith* and *Doctrine*. He that does so, let him look to the Consequences of his own Temper. There is nothing so very absurd, and out of the way,

SERM. XIII. but what he may in time embrace: if it happen to be his own Production, and may come to contend with more Confidence, and Heat for the Propagation and Success of the worst of Errors, than ever the Truth it self requir'd as necessary to its Support and Maintenance. And this is the *Second* dangerous Inconvenience that attends the spiritual Pride of Understanding, the Danger of Innovations and Corruptions in the primitive Faith; which is as heinous a Piece of Guilt in Christian Practice, and ought to be as carefully avoided as any other.

*Thirdly*, and to conclude this Argument, An over-weening Opinion of our spiritual Wisdom is more immediately prejudicial to our *Christian Practice*, in that 'tis directly opposite to *Humility*, that great fundamental Duty of Religion, with regard to our selves, and is not so well consistent with *Charity*, a Duty of the highest Consequence towards others.

*Humility* engages us to think meanly of ourselves, and our Endowments, considering with how much Weakness and Imperfection they are mixt and blended; and that they don't derive their Origin from our own Industry and Care, but from the Blessing and Assistance of *Almighty God*, who supplies us with the Means, and prospers the Methods of attaining any Perfection whatsoever. But now, a Man conceited of his religious Knowledge, attributes his great Achievements to the Strength of his own Parts, and the natural Parturiency of his Mind, which, by an innate Sagacity, strikes farther into the secret



cret Recesses of Truth; and from which nothing of so sublime and difficult a Nature can be withheld, when he once turns the Edge and Vigour of his Thoughts upon it. So far indeed this Man is not mistaken in thinking religious Knowledge the best, and most desirable of any; but here is his Fault, he imputes the Acquisition of it to his own Industry, and does not consider how much he wants, as well as what he has, and that what he has at best is much less than what he thinks it is; and in all these Points he offends against Humility. In his high Thoughts of himself, he *sacrifices to his own Net, and burns Incense to his Drag*; that is, he attributes all his Acquisitions to his own Industry and Sagacity, without ever taking in to his Consideration that first over-ruling Cause of all things, without whose Concurrence he could not move a Step; and without whose Blessing and Favour he would be *broken and disappointed in all his Purposes*. But, as the proud King of Babylon, when he walk'd in the greatness of his Strength, spoke thus to himself; *Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the Kingdom, by the might of my Power, and for the honour of my Majesty?* To the same Purpose does this proud haughty vain-glorious Man applaud himself: Is not this high Pitch of spiritual Wisdom, to which I am arriv'd, above the rest of Men, the Fruits of my own deep Study and Retirement? Who knows so much as I, and to whom am I any ways oblig'd for it, but to my self?

Dan. 4. 20.

From

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1 Cor. 13, 1,  
2, 3, 4, &c.

From whence he proceeds, in the next Place, to despise and overlook, and to carry himself insolently towards his Neighbours; which is, *Secondly*, a Violation of his *Charity*, a greater Perfection in Religion and Life than the highest Pitch of Knowledge whatsoever, though engag'd upon the noblest Subjects. For *though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, observe that, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing*; says the same great *Apostle*, that deliver'd my Text; who, when he compares these two great Qualities, Knowledge and Charity together, he represents the Danger and Inconveniencies of the former, though a worthy Accomplishment in it self, but at the same time the mighty Advantages, and most beneficial Influences of the latter; *Knowledge puffeth up*, says he, *but Charity edifieth*, in the Verse before my Text. We know upon what account the *Apostle* spoke these Words: His Design was to shew, that an Opinion of superior Wisdom inclin'd Men to look above their weaker Brethren, to have no Regard to their Infirmities, nor concern what Occasion of Scandal was given them by their Practice, as long as themselves follow'd the Dictates of a sounder Judgment, a more perfect Information.

We see then, what Danger there is in an Opinion of an Excess of Wisdom. How it takes Men off from that true gentle *Christian* Con-

Condescension to the Weakness and Infirmit-  
ties of our Neighbour, whilst it turns the  
whole Stress of Mens Thought and Admira-  
tion upon themselves; which would be much  
better employ'd in considering the Necessi-  
ties, and relieving the Ignorance of their Bre-  
thren; which in the Judgment of an *Apostle*  
himself is a more *excellent way*, than even  
the highest Exaltations and Illuminations of  
our Understandings, than even a Spirit of  
Prophecy it self.

*Let us then cover earnestly the best Gifts, al-  
ways preferring the Graces of a true Christi-  
an Life, such as Humility and Charity, to a-  
ny Perfections or Endowments of our Un-  
derstanding whatsoever; considering that  
when all the rest shall vanish and be forgot-  
ten for ever, yet these shall remain, and  
continue with us always, the main Grounds  
and chief Ingredients of our everlasting Hap-  
piness. For we are sure that Charity, which  
is the Bond of Perfection, the Abridgment of  
all Christian Graces, shall never fail: But* 1 Cor. 13. 8,  
*whether there be prophecies they shall fail, whe-* 9, 10.  
*ther there be tongues, they shall cease; whe-*  
*ther there be knowledge, it shall vanish away; For*  
*we know in part, and prophesie in part, but*  
*when that which is perfect is come, that which*  
*is in part, shall be done away.*



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*The Nature, Advantages, Object and  
Evidence of our Christian Hope.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Univerfity at *St. Mary's,*

*Sunday, December 15, 1700.*

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HEB. VI. 19.

*Which hope we have, as an anchor of  
the Soul, both sure and steadfast, and  
which entreth into that within the  
vail.*

**I**N the former Part of this Chapter, the  
Apostle endeavours to establish the Jewish  
Converts to Christianity, in the steadfast  
Profession of their Faith: He urges the Ne-  
cessity of their Perseverance in it, from the  
infinite Danger, and desperate Consequences  
of a Revolt from it; And he enforces the  
Reasonableness of it upon the ground of those  
high and excellent Advantages which God  
had

had propos'd to their Obedience in his Holy SERM. XIV.  
Promises.

It was the Wisdom of that *Holy Spirit*, by whom the *Apostles* were inspir'd, thus to proceed at the first Conversion of the World, by suiting and adapting their Discourse so particularly to the Temper and *Genius* of the People they had to deal with. And accordingly we find the *Author* of this *Epistle* to the *Hebrews* addressing himself to that Nation, in a way most proper to prevail upon the Humour and Principles of that People; by turning that side of his Arguments towards them which was most likely to take hold of their own Opinions, and so strike in with those early Persuasions, they had long before embrac'd, and continu'd under.

For, to a People, that valued themselves so very highly, and that with a great deal of Reason, upon the Promises of God made unto their *Fathers*, which they took to be the distinguishing Character of their Nation from all the Kingdoms of the Earth, the peculiar Mark of God's Care and Favour towards them; could there have been any Method of Application more proper and effectual, when they had once consented to the *Christian Faith*, than to plead the Force of the same Promises to them, as an Engagement of their new Obedience, which had been before deliver'd to their *Fathers*? which were only now explain'd to a more noble and spiritual Meaning, and rested still upon the same Truth and Faithfulness of God for their Performance, that ever they did before.

There

SERM. XIV. There is not, we are sure, any one Principle in general of a more prevailing Efficacy upon the Minds of Men, than the sure Expectation of Rewards hereafter; yet amongst a People, who were always acted by their Interest and Self-Love, and famous for it above other Nations, this way of arguing must have had some peculiar Advantage, in that they were so well inclin'd, and prepar'd to entertain it; more than we can easily suppose others to have been, who before were *Gentiles*, and therefore utter Strangers to what the *Covenants of Promise* meant.

*Ephes. 2. 12.*

The great Danger as to these *Jews* was this, lest they should still have retain'd their old Prejudices, which they had brought over with them into the Profession of *Christianity*, and those should have prov'd one time or other a *Rock of Offence* to them, and an Occasion of their Fall. For we know *that* People quite mistook the Promises of the Old Testament, both as to the Nature of them, and the Manner of their Accomplishment; so far as to make the Engagements of God to *Abraham* an Objection against receiving *him*, who was the only true Seed of *Abraham*, at *whom* all the Promises made to *Abraham* and his Posterity were aim'd, and in *whom* they were to receive their true and ultimate Completion. The *Apostle* therefore makes it his Concern in the first Place, to set them right in their Notion of these Promises, and then to keep them so; leading them on from their own Principles, to discover the Vanity and Falsity of their present Pretences; And proving from the Faith of *Abraham* himself, the



necessity of believing in *Christ* as the True SERM. XIV.  
Redeemer of the World.

And when the *Apostle* had thus drawn off the Promises of *God* to the *Jews*, from their immediate Regard to an *Earthly Canaan*, and had rais'd the Minds of his *Hebrew Disciples* Heb. 11. 16. a little higher, into an expectation of a *better Country*, even an *Heavenly one*, which it was the true Design and Drift of those Ancient Promises to represent; from hence he concludes the great Reasonableness and Authority of our *Christian Hope*, as it leans upon those Promises, and that former Establishment, as these were reinforc'd and strengthened by the Revelations of the *New Testament* in our *Blessed Saviour*. And having thus convinc'd them of the Reasonableness of their Hope, he goes on to inform them of the exceeding great Use and Excellency of it, in the Words that follow: *Which Hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entreteth into that within the veil.*

In my Discourse upon these words, I propose to consider these Three Things.

*First*, What is the nature of Hope in general, and more particularly as it stands the Duty and Privilege of a *Christian*; and where 'tis, that it either falls in with, or is distinguish'd from Faith and Charity, the other two great Principles of Obedience, with which 'tis usually reckon'd.

*Secondly*, What is the great Use and Necessity of it, in the Course and Conduct of our Religious Practice. 'Tis an *Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast.*

*Thirdly*,

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*Thirdly*, Wherein lies the peculiar Eminence and Excellency of it, both, upon the account of the glorious End and Object it aims at, and pursues; and of those degrees of Evidence and Assurance, under which it does so: And what is the full Meaning of those Words, *it enureth into that within the Vail*.

Though perhaps this may not seem to be the most natural and regular Method of speaking to these Points; yet because they lie in in this Order in the Text, I shall chuse rather to follow, than to invert *that*.

And *First*, I shall consider the nature of *Hope* in general, and more particularly as it stands the Duty and Privilege of a Christian; and where 'tis that it either falls in with, or is distinguished from *Faith* and *Charity*, the other two great Principles of Obedience with which 'tis usually reckon'd.

Now 'tis clear that *Hope* in general, as it is a Passion in our Nature, must be defin'd with Regard to the End and Object it pursues, and to the formal Way or Manner, under which it considers this End or Object of it self: And upon this ground, when we would determine what the *Hope* of a Christian is, we must explain it thus, 'Tis a Passion in our Soul arising from an apprehension of the Rewards of Heaven as future, and embracing them as desirable or attainable. And, as 'tis consider'd under *this* Notion, we may find it borrows something from the two Extremes, between which St. Paul has plac'd it, I mean *Faith* and *Charity*. *Faith* is the first Foundation upon which it rises, and 'tis Love that first actuates and informs it into a vital and moving

1 Cor. 13. 13.

ing Principle. Our Hope is founded first upon the Belief and Assurance of things to come; otherwise it is not possible our Mind should be in the least touch'd or affected by them, because without the conveyance of Faith, we are sure nothing that is future can possibly strike or move the Soul of Man.

But now, though without the Belief of things future and at a distance, in point of time, there could not be conceived any the least tendency to Motion or Inclination in the Mind towards them; yet, *that bare Belief* it self can never, by its own proper and immediate Virtue, produce that Inclination. And therefore *Hope* appears from hence to imply something more, in its full and adequate Notion, than a pure simple *Faith* only. For *that* only considers the Futurity and Certainty of things to come, and the degrees of Evidence for what it may expect; but *Hope* attends to the Natures and Consequences of these things themselves, how they may do us good, or any way promote our Happiness; and upon this Reflection, it stirs up the Soul to desire and affect them.

Nor is *this* any Prejudice or Diminution to the Virtue and Excellency of *Faith*, as 'tis represented in the Holy Scriptures; nor does it take off from those Glorious Characters given of it *there*, and those noble Performances ascrib'd to it, that we seem to strip it, in the true naked Essence of it, thus bare of all Life and Activity. For it must be consider'd, that *Faith* is not always in *Scripture* taken in its precise and abstracted sense, according to the strict and rigorous Notion of it,




 SERM. XIV. but as it is in conjunction there with some other Principles or Instances of Duty; suppose Fear, or Hope, or Love, or the like. Thus in one place 'tis describ'd as the *Substance of things hoped for*, and in another, 'tis express'd to *work by love*, which intimates, that *Faith* exerts its Vigour and Activity in comparison with some other Principle and Motive, without which, as the *Apostle* speaks of it *without Works*, 'tis perfectly dead and ineffectual.

It is thus necessary for us to give *Faith* its just and precise Character, when we would consider *Hope* as a Principle distinct from it; For in the general way of speaking, they are thrown together; and therefore before we can understand either of them aright, 'tis necessary to divide them. The difference then between *Faith* and *Hope* in short is this, that *Faith* asserts in the general, what *Hope* applies in the particular; And without this Application made by *Hope*, *Faith* it self, as it respects Good to come, is void, and can produce no Effect whatever. For a Man is never mov'd or affected by any future Good that he believes, unless he apprehend his own Interest or Happiness to be concern'd in it. And therefore whensoever 'tis we find *Faith* represented as exciting and putting Men upon Action, we must understand it does so, by applying to some other Principle within him, as his Fear, his Hope, his Desire, or some other; Because *Faith* alone cannot go beyond the just Extent of its office, which is not to move to Action, but to assent to Truth.

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But now, because, when we assent to things future, it is natural and necessary for us presently to consider what Regard and Relation these things stand in to our selves; which way they may either do us Good or Hurt; and while we reflect thus we are mov'd to Love or Hate, to Hope or Fear them; for this Reason it is, that we cannot so easily distinguish between a mere simple *Faith*, and those other different Acts of our Mind and Affections; and from hence, upon the account of their quick Succession to each other, we are apt to blend them together, and to consider them only as *one*, however distinct or separate in their own Nature.

Besides, that *Hope* is a Principle very different from *Faith*, if any further Proof were necessary, would sufficiently appear from hence, that we are sure the perfect and complete nature of *Faith*, taken merely as such, may be found in those Minds, where there is not the least glimmerings of Hope whatsoever. And thus it is in that deplorable case of Despairation on this side the Grave, the Torment of which is grounded upon a certain and infallible Belief of future Rewards, but an utter Denial and Exclusion of one's self from any Share or Title in them.

Again, *Hope* takes in the real Nature of *Faith* into it self, only in *one* of the *two* great Branches of it, as it considers good things to come; but there is likewise a Belief of future Punishments and Evils, and this too is as much comprehended, under the Notion of *Faith* as the former: And yet we know, *Hope*

SERM. XIV. has nothing to do here, for that regards  
*Good* only, and not *Evil*.

I have thus far consider'd how far *Faith* contributes to the Origination of *Hope*; I shall now, *Secondly*, explain how far *Love* or *Charity* likewise has its Share in the Constitution of this so excellent a *Grace*.

Rom. 8. 34.

It is certain then, from what has been said, that *Hope* must always respect something that is future. For, as the *Apostle* argues, *what a Man sees, why does he yet hope for?* that is, how can he in Reason be said to do so? But we know, every thing that may be future cannot be the Object of our Hopes; for then *Evil* might be so, but that is impossible. Wherein then lies the Reason of this Difference? In this, that we can never *hope* for any thing, but what may be an Object of our *Love*, and therein 'tis, we see, *Charity* bears its Proportion in the Composition of a Christian's *Hope*. When we apprehend things to come agreeable to our Nature, or our Interest, when we reflect upon them as the Instruments of our Pleasure, or the Means of our Perfection, 'tis then we contract a Liking to them, and our Souls begin to move towards them.

But this is not all yet; 'Tis not enough to produce *Hope* within us, that we believe things to come, and conceive a Love and Affection for them in our Minds, unless we likewise apprehend our own Interest concern'd in them, and that 'tis within the reach of our Power and Abilities to attain them. For how great soever our Love and Desire of things that are future, and that are agree-  
 \*  
 able



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able to us may be, yet we don't go on to hope for them presently upon that Account, unless we conceive of them as some way or other possible to be attain'd by our Endeavours. \* 'Tis possible a Man may love and desire a Happiness, which he thinks it utterly impossible for him ever to partake of, but he can never be said to hope for it in any Sense. That he may do the former is certain, because otherwise there would be no Torment in Despair, for that is founded upon, and supposes the Love and Desire of that thing which we cannot have; but for a Man to be without that thing which he does not desire, can never be in the least degree uneasy to him.

*Hope* then differs in something both from *Faith* and *Love*, as I have shewn at large, tho' it does indeed partake of both; and we may in general conclude there is such a Difference, because it makes up the Character of a third *Christian* Principle distinct from both. And the Distinction, as I said before, lies in this, that *Hope* superadds to our general Belief of the Futurity of things, and to our ge-

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\* Aristotle tells us, that a Man can't make anything the matter of his Election and Choice which he apprehends as impossible, because that would import he could apply himself to the Means of obtaining it, which we are sure he cannot. But still he may will it, and retain a Desire and Inclination towards it; and this the great Philosopher owns, in Contradistinction to the former, in express Words. Πραγεσσι μὲν ὃ ἐν ἐστὶ ἡ ἀδυναμία. Καὶ ἐὰν τις οὖν πρᾶξις ἴδῃ ὅτι ἐν ἀδυναμίᾳ ἐστὶν. Βέλους δ' ὅτι ἡ ἀδυναμία οὐκ ἀδυναμία. Aristot. Eth. ad Nicom. Lib. 3. Cap. 4.

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neral Love and Desire of them, the Probability likewise of our Attainment of them in particular: Otherwise, how firm soever our Faith of things to come may be, and how strong and importunate soever our Desire of them, yet *Hope* will never carry us on so far as to endeavour after them: Because we must presently conclude our Endeavours that way to be altogether vain and useless.

Thus, a Man may really believe a State of Happiness to come in another World, and most heartily desire his Share and Interest in the Glories of it; as there is no Question but every Man who thinks at all of these things must do one time or other of his Life; but if *God* himself had not been pleas'd to reach out his Hand to us from Heaven, and open the way to our Happiness in the *Blood of his only Son*, our Souls must have for ever sunk in Despair, and have eternally languish'd in vain and ineffectual Cries after that Happiness, which we must always have desir'd, and yet never could have so much as hop'd to enjoy.

Numb. 23. 10.

*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,* was a Reflection that cut deep upon the Soul of him that made it, when *God* was pleas'd to discover to him the Glories and Happiness of his Saints, but his own most miserable Fate in his Exclusion from them. And indeed the greater any Happiness is in it self, and the more deeply the Desire of it is rooted in our Nature, so much the more must the Reflections on it, sting and torment our Minds, if we could not flye for a Refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before

Heb. 6. 18.

us. Even an *eternal weight of glory* it self SER M. XIV.  
 would be an unsupportable Thought to the  
 Minds of Men, if they had not some Reason 2 Cor. 4. 17.  
 to believe that they should be one Day ad-  
 mitted to those Joys, which they now reach  
 and aspire after, with the utmost Longings  
 of their Souls.

And as it is *this*, that inflames the Desires,  
 and enlivens the Hopes of good Men, that  
 they are sure they shall not fail of Success in  
 their Inquiries and Endeavours after *glory and* Rom. 3. 7.  
*honour and immortality*; So, on the other  
 side, 'tis, because *ill* Men do not entirely give  
 up the Hopes of attaining these things, that  
 they can take any Peace and Comfort in li-  
 ving. But could one of these wicked Men  
 now see his Name struck out of the *Book of*  
*Life*, and read his eternal Banishment from  
 the joyous Presence of *God*, who is Life it  
 self; how sanguine a Sinner soever he  
 might be, it would tumble him down from  
 the Pride of his Glory, make him roll him-  
 self in the Dust, and groan and howl under  
 the Agonies and Anguish of his Spirit. But  
 'tis *this* that keeps up the Spirits of ill Men,  
*this* that supports the Courage of the bravest  
 Sinner, howsoever he may pretend to go on up-  
 on Principles of *Atheism* and Infidelity, that all  
 shall be well at last, and that he will one  
 time or other return, and be reconcil'd to  
 that God, by his Repentance, whom he now  
 pretends to despise.

And if these Sinners can raise so great a  
 Comfort to themselves, barely upon entertain-  
 ing a Prospect of Repentance, as it is ne-  
 cessary to put Men under a Capacity, and



SER. M. XIV. within the Hopes of future Happiness; How much more Reason then have good and pious Men to rejoice and triumph in Confidence of their actual Interest in God's Favour, and that their Title to it is firm and stedfast as the Foundation upon which it stands, the Mercy and Truth of God himself! If Hope be always full of Joy and Glory in proportion to the Greatness of its Object, and the Clearness of apprehending its own Right and Interest in it, what Thought then is able to fill the Minds of Men, like that of Heaven, of an infinite and eternal Happiness, or what Claim can be more infallible than that which relies upon the Word of Everlasting Truth it self!

Isa. 26. 3.

Rom. 5. 2.

1 Pet. 1. 8.

And yet *this* is the Foundation upon which the Mind of every good Man may rest it self secure. *Therefore thou shalt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed in thee; because he trusteth, or hopeth, in thee. Therefore we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, we abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost; and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And God has made it our Duty to do so, and has been pleas'd to put the Hopes of Heaven amongst the very Conditions of obtaining it; because he knew this was so very necessary to carry us through the Difficulties and Temptations of the World.*

Which brings me to the *Second* thing propos'd, namely, to consider, what the great Use and Necessity of our *Christian Hope* is, in the Course and Conduct of our religious Practice; 'tis an *Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast.*

'Tis

'Tis call'd an Anchor of the Soul under a Figure indeed, but with the greatest Reason. SERM. XIV.

*First*, In that it fixes and regulates our Desires, holding them close to their true and real Interest, and taking off our Minds from their extravagant Pursuits of worldly Vanities, which would either hinder or abate our Happiness. And this indeed a true *Christian Hope* does for us, by enabling our Minds to despise and overlook these things as fruitless and insignificant to our truest and last End.

*Secondly*, *Hope* is an *Anchor of our Soul*, in that it is a great Security to us against the Troubles and Afflictions of this World; because *Hope* looks beyond all these things, into a future State, and there discovers the proper Haven of our Rest and Peace and Happiness.

*Thirdly*, as the Consequence and Result from both the former, *Hope* keeps our Obedience firm and steady, by encouraging and enabling us to overcome those Temptations to Sin, that threaten and assault our Virtue.

These are the three great Advantages of a *Christian Hope*, in its Influence on our Religion; and these are the *Properties* of it, to which the Metaphor, under which *Hope* is here styl'd the *Anchor of our Soul*, seems to confine me.

And, *First*, *Hope* may be styl'd an *Anchor of the Soul*, in that it fixes and confines our Desires, holding them close to their true and real Happiness; and therein it lays the firmest Ground and Foundation for the Peace and Satisfaction of our Minds: Because 'it hereby prevents those many vexatious Defeats and

Disap-

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*Disappointments, which attend our Mistakes, in Matters of Good or Happiness, and which are the Issues of a misguided Choice.*

Our Desires, unless directed aright, and moving upon the true Ground, which God intended should only be able to support them, become to us the real Instruments of Misery, and prove the busiest Tormentors that we have: Because they will ever be putting us forward upon fresh Attempts and Enterprizes in our Inquiry after Happiness; in which if we fail of succeeding, they will be sure to lash and sting our Minds for it. And indeed, 'tis impossible they should ever do otherwise, as long as we fluctuate amidst the Uncertainties and Vanities of this World, and look for our Happiness there, where 'tis impossible it should ever be found. So long as we do so, we must be always wavering and unsteady in the Purposes of our Mind, always chusing, and always refusing, and never full.

And hence 'tis, that Men, that live at random in their Desires, and that they have not the certain Compass of a future State by which they are to steer their Intention, are under a necessity of often shifting the Objects of their Happiness; if it be possible, by this Means, to elude the Force of that Desire within their Souls, which they find they cannot satisfy. Men turn from one Point to another, from Business to Diversion, and round again; and their whole Lives are nothing but a Scene of new Designs, and new Disappointments. But when Mens Desires once come to be determin'd towards God, and their real Happiness, *This is the rest where-*  
with



*with ye may cause the weary to rest,* says God, by the Holy Prophet; *Here all our Hopes and Expectations come to be center'd;* and we find to full and entire a Satisfaction from *these* things, as will render our Enquiries useless any farther, and keep our stragling Thoughts and Affections at home within our own Breasts. And then all the other Pleasures and Enjoyments of our present State, will fall in, only as the Accessions to our main Happiness; but we shall in no wise look upon them as the proper Grounds and Supports of it. If we then find any Comfort from the World, we shall consider it as some part of that Portion which God has *here given the Sons of Men*, and we may rejoyce in it as the Effects and Issue of his Goodness and his Kindness towards us; but then we take care never to promise our selves *much* from hence, and we find we need not do so.

For indeed the hopes of enjoying God and a future Glory are Thoughts so pregnant, and big with Comfort to the Minds of Men, that they in a manner drown and silence all other inferior Desires in our Nature. And howsoever other Temporal Affairs may go with us, *though the labour of the Olive should fail,* and there *should be no Fruit in the Vine,* tho' the Voice of Temporal Joy and Gladness should be cut off within our Dwellings, yet our Minds can never droop and languish, whilst we have this Refuge and Security, that the *Comforts of God are ready within us* to support and to *refresh our Souls*. And for a Man indeed, to have such a Reserve of Happiness and Peace amidst all the Toils and Tu-

Hab. 13. 17.

SERM. XIV.  mulls and Travels of human Affairs, in which the deeper we are engaged, the more of the *other* we shall certainly find, is an unspeakable Advantage to the Mind of Man; 'tis that only, which will make us undergo these things with Cheerfulness, and whatever the Success may prove, carry us out of them with Triumph and Satisfaction: For while our *Du-ty*, which is our main Design, goes on well and prosperously; and our Hopes of our exceeding great Reward, arising from the Conscience of our Obedience, are ever dwelling upon our Thoughts, all other things will appear little and inconsiderable to us, we shall neither court the Favour, nor fear the Terrors of the World: Which is another great Advantage of our Christian *Hope*, that it will,

*Secondly*, Be a firm Security to us against the Storms of Life, the Troubles and Afflictions of this World; because *Hope* looks beyond all these things into a *future* State, and there discovers the proper Haven of its Rest and Peace and Happiness. To be able to see through the Cloud, and to discern the *Angel* of Salvation standing behind it, will make us enter into it with Courage and Resolution: And those bright and joyous Reflections, that will attend our Passage through it, will take off from the gloominess and the uneasiness of the Way. He, that has his Eye in Heaven, fix'd upon the Blessed *Jesus*, the *bright* and *morning* *Star* of his Desires, may sing even while he passes through the *vale* and *shadow* of *Death*, and dare even to defy the *Powers* of *Darkness* to molest him, within their own Dominions.

For,

For, 'tis not the natural Weight and Pressure of Affliction it self, if we consider aright, that sits so heavy upon the Minds of Men, and sinks them so far below themselves; but they are our own Thoughts, our own sharp and cutting Reflections, that give our Miseries such advantage over us, as to make us sometimes think our Wound incurable, and our Grief without remedy. We seem to hug and embrace our own Sufferings, and add to their weight the strength of our own Arms, in pulling it closer upon us. But could we suspend our Attention, for a while, and call off our Thoughts from the pursuit of their own Misery, (And this cannot be done but by turning them to a brighter side, and by representing to them the mighty Prospect of our future Glory) we should then quickly find, that the very slighting our Troubles would break the Force of them; and they could not be so very importunate, when they were so much neglected. If we would take care to keep our Minds full with the hopes of Heaven, and, upon our Contemplation of *Jerusalem* above, resolve to set our Faces hard towards it, it would not then be possible for any cloud of Trouble to settle upon our Souls, and the Arrows of Affliction would glance off without wounding them.

'Tis certainly one of the most deplorable Cases, that our Nature in its present State can be reduc'd to, for a Man to be under great and actual Troubles in this World, and at the same time the Dread and Terror of worse to come. And tho' a Man does not fall



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fall under the Terrors of a future State, yet to be merely without comfortable Reflections on his Condition hereafter, at a time when Darkness and Sorrow are round about him, and he can see no end of them, is what must needs confound the Thoughts of the wisest Man amongst us, and reduce him to such Perplexity and Anguish, against which no Reason or *Philosophy* can relieve him.

For the Arguments, which both these offer him, are such only, as determine on this side the Grave; but when a Man thinks he has reason to loath and hate Life it self, as he may under the former Case, to what purpose is it to go about to use such Arguments to him, as proceed only upon the Supposition of his Desire and Love of Life. It must be the light of God's Countenance only, that can support a Man in such a Case as this. And those bright and surprizing Views of the Joys and Happiness above; and that real Conviction of an Interest in another World, which the *Good Spirit* of God will then open to the Minds of good Men, are such, as will not only give them Patience and Support under their present *Sufferings*, but enable them even to rejoice and triumph in the midst of them; in as much as they know that their

2 Cor, 4. 17. *light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory.*

We all are, or may be, convinc'd of the utter Vanity and Insufficiency of the World, and all the Comforts of it, to support a Man when he comes to stand in real need of them. Indeed, while the Mind is sound and vigorous,

and,

and, by the firmness of its natural Complexion SERM. XIV.  
 and Courage, is well enough able to support  
 it self without these outward things, they  
 may then seem to claim a greater Share in  
 the Frame and Constitution of our Happiness,  
 than even they can really deserve; because  
 we seldom take the pains at such times to con-  
 sider how far exactly they go to make it up.  
 But under a sad and disconsolate Spirit, then  
 is the time for these things to do their Parts  
 by us, if they can do anything: And do they  
 so indeed? Can they give ease to a *wounded Spi-*  
*rit*, or make up the Breaches of our Peace  
 within? No, they cannot: All our Learning,  
 our Reputation, our Wisdom, our Riches,  
 our Honour, our Friends fail and sink under  
 us, and we are left to look out for Comfort  
 wheresoever else we can find it. And if then  
 our Minds can give us any reasonable Assu-  
 rance of God's Favour, and of the Glory laid  
 up in Heaven for us, how must this revive  
 and strengthen our Souls, convey a secret Vi-  
 gour through our feeble Knees, distill an  
 healing Balm upon our Spirits, and make our  
 Faces shine in the midst of Despair! Without  
 this, how advantageous soever the other Cir-  
 cumstances of our Condition may appear out-  
 wardly, though we seem to have all the In-  
 struments of Happiness about us, yet will our  
 Souls refuse to be comforted in these things;  
 and in the midst of all this Plenty, *we shall*  
*be in want.* For when we thus *sink in the*  
*deep mire, and the waters come into our Soul,*  
 then is the Season for God alone to interpose  
 for our Assistance and Consolation; then the  
 hopes of Heaven, and the delightful Pro-  
 spect

SERM. XIV. spect of that fulness of Joy at God's right hands become an anchor to secure our Peace, amidst all the dashing Billows, and against the Violence of outward Afflictions. As our Hope will likewise, in the

*Third place*, Be the best Means to keep our Obedience firm and steady, by encouraging and enabling us to overcome those Temptations to Sin, that threaten and assault our *Virtue*.

And *this*, as I intimated, is a *Refusal* and Consequence from *both* the former Considerations: For if by an over-powering Sense of the Happiness of another World, and under lively Expectations of it, we have once gone so far, as to disarm the Pleasures and Glories of this World of their Charms, and the Evils and Afflictions of it of their Sting, what is there then that can prevail with us to leave our *Duty*, and to sin against God?

When we commit Sin, we do it with the proposal of some Temporal Interest, or to avoid some outward Suffering; But now, upon this Ground and Supposition, that we have laid up all our Interest in Heaven, and directed our Hearts and Expectations thither, these temporary Goods and Evils appear to us inconsiderable and empty; less than Nothing and Vanity. And our Minds will come to be so vigorously drawn in time by the attractive Powers of a future State, that there will be hardly room for any other Desire, in any considerable degree, within our Hearts. And we shall have so learnt to live upon the Reversion of future *Glories*, as to make a due respect to *these*, the Rule and Measure of our Actions; so as almost quite to overlook what

is



is present, any farther, than is necessary for SERM. XIV.  
 our more convenient Support, and needful  
 Comfort, in our Passage to the other World.

Besides, by sinning against God, we are sensible that we interrupt the gracious Intercourse between Heaven and our Souls, and break off the Chain of Communication, in which Life and Joy descend upon our Minds from thence, and in which our Hopes ascend thither; and this will be an ungrateful, harsh Reflection to us, and therefore a most powerful Restraint upon us from Evil; and a firm Guard and Security to our Perseverance.

I have thus shewn in what sense *Hope* is here styl'd by the *Apostle* the *Anchor of our Souls*; and how justly it answers the Metaphor, in three general Instances of it.

I come now to consider, *Thirdly*, where in lies the peculiar Eminence and Excellency of our *Christian Hope*, both upon the account of the glorious End and Object it aims at and pursues, and of those degrees of Evidence under which it thus pursues it: Which was the *last* thing to be spoken to, and which I take to be imply'd in these words of the *Apostle*; and which entreteth into that within the veil.

Which Expressions intimate to us not only the mighty Privilege of our *Christian Hope*, in that it points out to us the most glorious Object, infinitely transcending what any other Religion could propose; But these words likewise plainly imply the particular Way and Manner in which our Minds are employ'd about this glorious Object; That, as the Rewards themselves laid up in Heaven for us

SERM. XIV. are really the greatest and noblest that human Nature is capable of; so our *Hopes* of them, even while we are in this World, *enter in within the vail*; take a Survey and View of them, make them present and actual to our Thoughts; and by a strong and peremptory Presumption of their Futurity, even antedate our Happiness hereafter, in the Joy and Rapture of those devout Contemplations, under which we behold it at the present.

I shall speak to these *things* distinctly, because they are indeed different Considerations; and shall shew, in the *First* place, the Nobleness and Excellency of our *Christian Hope*, from that transcendent difference there is between those things, which the Hope of a Christian proposes, as the Motives to his Obedience, and what any other Religion in the World could ever pretend to. To prove this Point, the *Apostle* instances particularly in the Religion of the *Jews*, which was, before *Christianity*, the most excellent of any other, and establish'd upon *Divine* Authority. And yet the great Imperfection of it appears in *this*, that it left that People under such confus'd and obscure Apprehensions of a future State, and of the Nature of it: By which means they were left without that *vail*, which we now enter, and by doing so are admitted to understand those Mysteries, which they must not have look'd upon.

There is no Question, but there were admirable Truths imply'd and couch'd under the *Levitical* Symbols, and this of Life *Eternal* more especially. But as long as these things lay thus retir'd from the way of common Appre-

prehenſion, 'twas impoſſible they ſhould in any conſiderable Meaſure influence the Hopes and Practices of Men. For whatever Light might ſit upon the Face of Moſes, yet we know there was a vail over it; and we are ſure, the Children of Iſrael could not look to the end of that which is now abolish'd. For the way, within the vail, to the Holy of Holies, was not yet made manifeſt, while the firſt Tabernacle was yet ſtanding; the Holy Ghoſt this ſignifying, that the Vail was not to be rent aſunder, nor the Myſteries within diſplay'd and laid open, but only at the Death, and by virtue of the Sacrifice of Jeſus Chriſt.

But now, through a new and living way which he has conſecrated for us through the vail, that is to ſay his Fleſh, and having an High Priest over the Houſe of God, we draw near with a true heart in full aſſurance of Hope, and have the boldneſs to enter into the Holieſt by the blood of Jeſus.

What an infinite Privilege is this? Without which Moſes was under a neceſſity of leaving his Followers, and who, as he muſt not bring them into an Earthly Canaan, ſo neither could he give them any great and evident Security of a better Country. To paſs within a Vail, implies a Happineſs too big for our preſent Apprehenſion. 'Tis to be admitted to ſuch Degrees of Joy and Blifs, as, in this feeble Condition of our Nature, we cannot underſtand; and which, till we are even exalted above our ſelves, we ſhall not be able to bear! To dwell in the Temple of God for ever, and to approach the Tabernacle which the Lord has pitch'd, and not Man! To follow the



SERM. XIV. *Lamb whithersoever he goeth, to be with him, and to behold his Glory, and to partake of it!*

Heb. 12. 22,

23.

*To come to mount Zion, the city of the living God, the new Jerusalem, to the assembly of the First-born, to an innumerable company of Angels, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect! Where all the Beauties of God's Nature shall be unvail'd, and the dark and mysterious Paths of his Providence shall be resolv'd! Where perfect Knowledge and perfect Love shall combine to make us happy for ever, beyond all our Conceptions, and beyond all our Desires! And where Joy and Peace shall rule in every Capacity of our Nature!*

*If any thing surely can allure our Hopes, or affect our Desires, these things must do it; And God design'd they should do so, and therefore propos'd them as the strongest Engagements of our Hope, and the most powerful Incitements of our Duty.*

*And indeed without these things, what is the Life of Man? or what worthy End can it propose to it self? Without these things, what should make us desire the Continuance of our Being any longer, or engage us to be thankful that ever we had it? Without these things, the Springs of our Nature would fail and slacken; because there would be nothing to engage them, and the Vigour and Activity of our Minds would sink away, for want of something to bear up the Weight and Stress of our Desires.*

*And yet as great and glorious as these Instances of our Happiness are, which I have mention'd, they were once perfectly unknown, and not so much as suspected by the Nations*  
of

of the World; And if the Kindness of God SREM XIV  
 our Saviour had not appeared, and brought Life   
 and Immortality to light by the Gospel, neither Tit. 3. 4.  
 they, nor we, had ever heard of them: Till  
 that time Ignorance over-spread the whole  
 Earth, like Darkness upon the Face of the  
 primitive Deep, and Mankind was left with-  
 out Hope, and without a God in the World;  
 Deliver'd over to the blind and uncertain  
 Guesſes of deprav'd natural Reason, and with-  
 out any ſure and infallible Direction to the  
 main and ultimate End of their Life and Be-  
 ing. But let us learn to meaſure and value  
 the Greatneſs of our own Happineſs, ſo much  
 the more, by their wants of it; and endea-  
 vour to enliven our *Hopes*, and quicken our  
 Deſires of ſo great a Bleſs, in proportion to  
 theſe larger Discoveries God has given us of  
 another State.

And this leads me to the *Laſt* Particular  
 under this Head, which is the only thing, that  
 yet remains to be conſider'd. And 'tis *this*,  
 the peculiar Excellency of our *Chriſtian Hope*,  
 from the greater degrees of Evidence and Af-  
 ſurance, under which it purſues this glorious  
 Object; of which degrees the *Apoſtle* im-  
 plies 'tis capable, when he tells us, that it  
 enters in within the veil.

And this Evidence of our *Chriſtian Hope* a-  
 riſes, not only from the general Ground and  
 Foundation, on which 'tis built, the Truth  
 and Promiſes of God in *Holy Scripture*; but  
 more particularly from the Teſtimony of our  
 own private Conſcience pronouncing upon  
 the Sincerity of our Faith and Obedience :  
 Which Teſtimony within us is wrought by

SERM. XIV. the secret Operation of God's *Holy Spirit*, which  
*beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the*  
 Rom. 6. 8. *Children of God.*

For our Hopes of future Glory, when they are regular and well grounded, arise always in proportion to the Evidence of our Sincerity; and when our Zeal abates, and our Care and Watch upon our Duty grow remiss and slack, our Hopes themselves must likewise fail and sink together.

But when a Man, by a frequent Victory over his Temptations, and a constant and regular course of Piety and Devotion, comes to have such a Conviction of his own Sincerity, that it leaves no room upon his Spirit for his Doubt and Suspicion of it, so that he can even venture to appeal to God himself for the Truth and Uprightness of his Heart, and in an humble Confidence say with *Holy David*, *Search me, O God, and try me*; 'Tis then his hopes of Life and Glory grow up forcibly within him; and break in upon his Mind with such an irresistible Light and Conviction of his Share and Interest in God's Love and Favour towards him, that he seems almost to enter upon the present Possession of Happiness. He now looks upon Discourses of another World, and the Glories of the Blessed, no longer as things at a Distance, in which he is unconcern'd, but, by a Resolution and Peremptory Act of lively *Hope*, he enters even *now within the veil*, and is curious to survey the least Particular of that Felicity, which shall shortly be his Portion.

I would



I would not here be understood to say, that SERM. XIV.  
no Man can be within the Terms of *Grace*,  
and a Capacity of Salvation, but he that is  
arriv'd at such a firm Assurance of it: For  
it is certain there are different degrees of  
*Hope* as well as *Faith*; and God only knows,  
what little Portions of either he may accept,  
as the indispensable Condition of Life, and  
the exact Boundary on this side Death; who  
will not, as he tells us himself, *break the* Matt. 12. 20.  
*bruised Reed*, nor *quench the smoking Flax*.  
But so far we may be certain, that if we our  
selves would receive any great Comfort from  
our Religion, if we would make *our Calling* 2 Pet. 1. 10.  
*and Election sure*, we must aim at greater  
things, and endeavour after Perfection in our  
Piety; and then our Hopes and Expectations  
of the Rewards of it will be lively and ef-  
fectual.

This indeed is our *Duty*, and 'tis no more  
than what has been the *Practice* of some brave  
and generous Souls, over whom the Flatteries  
and Terrors of *this* World have had no  
Power, in that they were so entirely over-  
born by the prevailing Sense and Conviction  
of the *glory to be reveal'd*.

1 Pet. 5. 2.

And *this* might be the Perfection of every  
one of us, if we would act up to the Mea-  
sures of our Christian Religion, and accord-  
ing to the full Direction of our most Holy  
*Faith*. But we are not to think 'tis a Work  
to be done at once, for a Man to arrive at such  
a firm Evidence of his Interest in God's Fa-  
vour: No, it is a Business of Time and Industry;  
It requires greater Resolution and Fervour in  
our Duty, greater Frequency in our Prayers,

SERM. XIV. more perfect Purity in our Hearts, more Sincerity of Intention, and Abstraction of Soul from the Lusts and Pollutions of the World, than what the generality of Men, if we may guess by their Manners, seem to be aware of.

But, may the God of Hope and Consolation make us all to abound in Hope, through the Power of the Holy Ghost; that having this hope we may purify our selves as he is pure; and may at last obtain the end of our Hopes, the salvation of our immortal Souls.

The

*The Nature of Christian Forgiveness of  
Injuries, and by what Rules we may  
try our Practice of it.*

A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the  
University on St. Andrew's Day,  
Thursday, November 30, 1794.

LUKE. VI. 37.

Forgive

**T**HAT our *Blessed Saviour* should lay  
so very great a Weight and Stress  
upon the Duty of *Christian Forgiveness*,  
and that he should enforce it  
upon no less than the highest Sanctions, as  
he plainly appears to do throughout the *Gospel*,  
we cannot think it strange, when we  
consider what Opposition was like to be  
made to it from the Lusts and Prejudices of  
the *World*. For which Reason, it was no  
more than necessary, that he should allure  
Mens



SERM. XV. Mens Obedience to it by the greatest *Mercies*, and guard against the Breach and Violation of it, by the severest *Terrors* of the *Gospel*; that he should enjoin it upon Reasons of absolute Necessity, and with an Authority strong enough to prevail against all Objections, and to over-balance all the contrary Tendency of corrupt Nature, of Opinion, and Custom.

How far human Reason and Philosophy could, or did prevail, in this particular Instance of Duty, either to discover the Nature of it, or to infer the Necessity of its Obligation, we may be very well convinc'd from the Accounts which the wisest of the ancient *Philosophers* have given us concerning it. Some amongst them we find there are that fairly and openly declare against it, as either a Vice in *Morals*, or an Imperfection in Nature; and that not to revenge an Injury, when within a Man's Power to do so, argued a tame and degenerate Spirit, a Mind sunk and fallen from its native Height and Resolution, and unfit to engage in great and generous Designs.

And though we can't say this was the Opinion of every one of them, or indeed the standing and regular Declaration of the very same Person, upon all, and different Occasions, at one time speaking to the popular Judgments of Men, and at another disputing more closely to Reason and Nature in Retirement, yet even those wise Men amongst them, that had gone farthest in their Inquiries and Resolutions of this Nature, even so far, as to conclude *forgiveness of injuries a*  
kind

*kind* of Duty, and fit for some Reasons to be observ'd, even *these* very Men themselves give in such lame and imperfect Descriptions of its Nature, and go about to establish its Observance upon such weak and slippery Foundations, with so little Zeal and Concern, whether Men practis'd it or not, as sufficiently shews us they were not themselves satisfy'd with the Result of their own Reasonings; and therefore distrust'd the Force of their Arguments upon the Minds of other Men.

And if we look into the *Mosaick* Law, which was indeed an Elevation of Nature, as it then stood corrupted, to a Pitch above its own; yet we shall not find the Case much better; *this* too so far consulted the Weakness of Nature, as not too strain too high above it, and made very great Condescensions to the Corruptions and Infirmities of Men: Which, as it appears, were not able at that time to comport with *Duties* of so very high and spiritual a Perfection, as *this* was. For indeed, the State of Men in those Days would not admit of it, because of the *hardness of their hearts*; that is, upon the account of that Indisposition to obey, which they lay under from their own Corruptions.

And therefore we see the Obligation of the present Duty rather insinuated in the Books of *Moses*, than clearly and openly asserted; we find it deliver'd with so much Obscurity, propos'd under so great Uncertainty, and so extreamly weaken'd by large Concessions from the Strictness and Letter of it, as we are sure left room for so very wrong and fatal a Construction, as did indeed entirely

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Mat. 5. 43.

ly undermine, and overthrow the very Nature of the *Duty*. Thou *shalt love thy Neighbour; and hate thy Enemy*, was, it seems, a *Principle* amongst that People, that could plead the Authority of ancient Days, and the Prescription of Ages: Which so very gross Corruption yet could never have prevail'd so far, under so thorow an Acquaintance with the Law, as we must suppose amongst that People, from the frequent Repetition of it in their Ears, if there had not been some Countenance, at least some Occasion, given for it, from Liberties in this Point allow'd, and even authoriz'd in the Body of the *Law* it self.

So very necessary was it that our *Blessed Saviour* should build and settle this *Duty*, upon other Foundations besides those of Nature; that he should fill up the Measures of *Moses's* his Law, where it was defective in this Case; that he should enlighten it where it proved obscure, and strengthen it where it stood in need of a Support; and this *latter* he very plainly does in my Text, and the Words that immediate follow it, where he commands us to *forgive*, and inforces his Injunction with this strong Reason; because our own Forgiveness with God his Father depends upon our right Performance of it. *Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.*

I propose to insist no farther at present than upon the Command it self, as being a Subject large enough for the Compass of a single Discourse; and in treating on it, I shall endeavour these *three* things.

*First,*



*First*, I shall enquire whether Revenge or a Return of Injuries, the opposite Quality and Practice to *Forgiveness*, has any true Foundation in natural Reason. SERM. XV.

*Secondly*, I shall proceed to explain at large the Nature of *Forgiveness*, as it stands a Duty of the *Christian* Religion; and take some Care to prevent, or remove, the most common and dangerous Mistakes of Men about it.

And, *Thirdly*, I shall lay down some Rules for our better Direction, that we may not impose upon our selves in the Practice of this Duty, by vainly imagining we perform it, when indeed we do not.

And, *First*, I am to enquire, in a few Words, whether Revenge, or a Return of Injuries, the opposite Quality and Practice to *Forgiveness*, has any true Foundation in natural Reason. 'Tis certain that by the Doctrine of the *Gospel* no Return of Injuries whatsoever can be lawful, as I shall prove hereafter. When Men therefore plead, in any Sense, for the Lawfulness of Revenge, as we know they will sometimes very warmly do, they must proceed upon this Ground and Supposition, that Revenge was ever, and is still a Right of Nature; tho' it be indeed bound up and restrain'd by the Laws of *Christianity*. And that therefore we are properly said to *forgive*, because we recede from some natural Right of our own, which we might otherwise take, out of Obedience to the Precepts of the *Gospel*. But this I shall shew is a vain Allegation; and however it may and has been often urg'd, that there cannot be any real Pretence, or true ground of Reason to suppose it.

To

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To prove this, I shall not run back Nature, and *strip* it into such a *wild and imaginary State*, as some in their *idle Hypothesis* have fram'd of it. For we may make better and truer Discoveries of what Rights are really natural, by considering Nature as it always *was*, and ever *will* be (and not what we may fancy it) invested with those Properties, and endued with those Inclinations, which were given it by the great *Creator*, for Ends and Purposes, which it ever did, and ever will propose to it self. If then it appear, that private *Revenge*, in the necessary Consequence of it, contradicts a true natural Original Inclination, I hope, it may be allow'd not to be natural it self; because true Nature contains no contrary Principles in it, and is never at Odds and Variance with it self.

But now, if an Inclination to *Society* be truly a natural one, rooted in us from the very Frame of our Being, as it has been always own'd to be, then 'tis certain that private *Revenge* cannot be a Right of Original Nature, because it is fundamentally inconsistent with *Society*. For no *Society* can subsist without Government, in which there must be, of necessity, a Subordination of Inferiors to a superior Power; and there can be no such Subordination as this, where every one has an equal Right in that which is the chief *Subject Matter* of Government; as the Reparation of Injuries, and Distribution of Punishments, in Proportion to the Offences of Men against each other, must be acknowledged to be. But now, private *Revenge* violently assumes this Power to it self, out of the

the Hands of Government, and by it, every Man takes upon himself to be a Judge of his own Injuries, without any Deference or Respect to a Superior; so that Government is here plainly superseded by it, in the chief Business of its Institution and Employment, and disappointed of the main End for which it was design'd; and consequently must dissolve, there being no farther Use of it, or Business for it. From whence it clearly follows, that if a Desire of Society be a natural Inclination, that then private Revenge can have no true Foundation in Nature, any more than it has in *Christianity*.

'Twas necessary for me thus to consider this Point a little, in order to remove an ill-natur'd Prejudice, that would certainly lye at the Bottom of Mens Hearts against this Duty, if private *Revenge* should be thought to have any true Spring and Original in *Nature*: For as long as we believe true Nature, as such, to be under so violent a Bent and Inclination as *Revenge* imports, we must necessarily look upon that Duty of *Religion*, which lays such a firm Restraint upon it, as a Cramp and Encroachment upon our natural Liberty, such as comes to ravish Nature from its Original Course and Tendency, and goes about to subvert the very fundamental Principles of our Being.

'Tis true indeed, by the Corruption of Times and Opinions, Men for a long time lay under almost a total Neglect, and Violation of this great Duty of *Religion*; and the times of this ignorance God was pleased to wink at, and to suffer the Nations of the World

Act. 17. 30.

to



SERM. XV. to go on in their own Ways, how wrong soever. But though God thought fit to pass by the frequent Transgressions of a natural and necessary Duty, in Mercy to the Infirmities of Men, this I hope does not prove it to be no Duty at all, or indeed to be ever the less so: And yet *none* in those Ages it must necessarily have been, if Revenge had been naturally lawful. For it could have been no Man's Duty to forgive, if every Man had a natural Right to punish.

*Christianity* therefore turns us out of no Right or Privilege in this Case, which we ever had before; and when it commands us with so great Authority, and upon such high Penalties to forgive, this is no more, than what Men ought always to have done, howsoever they might erroneously conceive themselves to be left under a greater Liberty. *Forgiveness* is therefore indeed an old Commandment, a Law of natural Religion, establish'd upon necessary and immutable Reasons, upon Reasons of God's Government of the World, and Man's Duty of Subjection and Obedience to him. But then, 'tis again a new Commandment, in that our Blessed Lord, by the clearer Revelations of the Gospel, has more fully brought to light the Nature, and Extent, and Obligation of it, has explain'd it to far greater Advantage, and has enjoin'd it upon Reasons and Motives peculiar to himself, and his Religion.

I shall therefore now, in the *Second* place, proceed to explain this Duty at large, as it stands a Duty of *Christianity*; and take some Care to prevent or remove the most common  
and

and dangerous Mistakes about it. And the SERM. XV.  
 Nature of it may very well be comprehend-  
 ed under *three* Particulars, in regard to the  
 several Offices it performs upon us.

*First*, As it commands us to overcome our  
 inward Passion and Resentments, and to  
 quench and suppress all Inclinations and De-  
 sires of Revenge within our own Hearts.

*Secondly*, As it restrains our outward Acti-  
 ons, and forbids any Manner of injurious Re-  
 turn whatever in our Practice.

*Thirdly*, As it infers the Recovery of a per-  
 fect Good-will, and Kindness to the injurious  
 Person, and implies a Readiness to do him all  
 Offices of Humanity and *Christian Charity*.

And *First* we may consider this Duty of  
*Christian Forgiveness*, as it commands us to o-  
 vercome our inward Passions and Resent-  
 ments, and to quench and suppress all Incl-  
 inations and Desires of *Revenge* within us.  
 And *herein* it comes to differ from the Grace  
 and Virtue of *Meekness*, that whereas 'tis the  
 peculiar Office of that *Grace*, to regulate our  
 Anger in its Rise and Motion, either entire-  
 ly suppressing it, or prescribing Laws to its  
 Progress, and confining it within the Bounds  
 of Reason and *Religion*; so when it *has* once  
 moved and acted within due Compass, which  
 surely it *may* do without any Offence, or  
 Breach of Duty, then comes in the part of  
*Christian Forgiveness*, to take down the Passi-  
 on, to cool the Resentment, and to restore  
 the Mind to its natural and easie Posture. If  
*Meekness* therefore do not first set the Mea-  
 sures to our *Anger*, it must prove irregular  
 as to its Origin or Degree; and if *Forgiveness*  
 does

SERM. XV. does not in due time flake and remove it, it becomes inordinate and sinful in its Duration. The Virtue of *Meekness* therefore must over-rule it in its *Rise* and *Progress*, and that of *Forgiveness* must fix the Bounds to its *Continuance*.

Now this *First Part* of the *Duty* is transacted intirely within a Man's self, and the Influence of it, is immediately confin'd to his Will and Affections, and respects not the outward Behaviour, any further, than as *that* derives from those inward Springs and Principles of Action.

And indeed, here 'tis that the *Laws of Christianity* begin, and have their chiefest Aim, to rule and regulate the inward Motions of the *Heart*, to restore and set *that* right in the first Place; for if *that* be rotten and vicious, a Man's Life is poison'd in the very Fountain of it, and all the Streams and Issues that flow from thence, must carry the same Taint and Corruption along with them.

But more especially as to the present Case; if any angry and revengeful Temper prevail within us, it hurries off the Soul from its religious Obedience, and carries all the Powers of it into a preternatural and violent Course; utterly indisposing a Man for those Acts of *Devotion* and *Charity*, in which the very Life of a *Christian* does consist: And therefore it is impossible to reconcile it with any tolerable Obedience here, or Hopes of Happiness hereafter.

Upon which Account it is that when our *Blessed Saviour* points out the great Lines of a *Christian Temper* for our Imitation, he proposes



poses a meek and humble Habit of Mind, as the chiefest Instance in which we must resolve to follow him, if we intend ever to be like him either in Holiness or Happiness. *Learn of me, says he, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your Souls.* But now a rancorous and revengeful Constitution of Mind is the most directly opposite to this that can be; and involves such a Complication of ill Qualities in it, such a Mixture of Pride and irregular Self-love, and a thousand other black Consequences, into which those two pregnant Sins diffuse themselves, that 'tis one of the severest and most dangerous Enemies, we have to contest with in our whole *Christian Warfare*. And 'tis certain, if this Temper be not broken, 'twill be impossible we should ever bow our Necks to the Yoke of Christ. *Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted that are far from righteousness,* says God, by the Prophet; implying the wide Distance this Sin will always make between him and us; and so for ever block up all Approaches to our Happiness.

But here, perhaps some Men will object; What? are we not allow'd then to be angry for the Affronts and Injuries we receive from Men? Has God put such a strong Passion into our Nature, only to rack and torture us in a violent Restraint and Confinement of it? No, he has not; and 'tis sure we may be lawfully angry, within the Limits that he himself has set us. And it must be consider'd, that it is not against Anger it self, in its own Nature, that I am now pleading; but against the *Inordinacy* and *Irregularity*

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Ephes. 4. 26.

of it, in point of time; when it passes the due Period he has determin'd for it, and from a Transport of Passion grows into the settled State and Habit of the Soul: When it once comes to this, 'tis exorbitant and sinful, and howsoever we may complain of the Violence of the Passion, that will be no Excuse for its Extravagance. *Be angry*, says the *Apostle*, and *sin not*, *let not the Sun go down upon your wrath*; from whence 'tis plain, that all *Anger* is not a *Sin* in its Nature, but if it hold us too long, it becomes so by its Duration.

But are not the Tempers and Complexions of Men, you will say, very different, and consequently the Passions and Resentments that arise from thence? Can every Man command his *Anger down* with the *Sun*, and overcome the Turbulency and Hurry of his Passion, within the same Compass of a few Hours, that one perhaps may? If not, how then can the *Apostle's* Precept in these Words be a Rule to all Men, any more than the same Proportion of Habit will fit all Statures?

To this it may be answer'd, That we must indeed allow the Frame and Complexions of Men to be very different from each other, and to give a quite different turn, and ply to their Passions; and therefore what the *Apostle* intended in general by this Rule, was this, that it is our Duty not to cherish at least, or indulge our *Anger* beyond that Period, that we should overcome and subdue it sooner than that if possible; but however, in such a Proportion of time, we should be actually striving against it, in contention with it, and in some fair Tendency to a Victory over it:  
That

That we should not, for a longer Space, let **SREM XV.** harsh and angry Reflections pass up and down with our Soul regardlessly; but choke and stifle them, as fast as we apprehend them, and begin to gather in the *Reins* of our Passion in due time, and not let it run loose and without controul, 'till it hurry us into unlawful Practices. And *this* surely, is equally in every Man's Power to do, be his Complexion what it will, to set himself thus early to oppose, and struggle against his own Resentments, tho' it may *not* be entirely to subdue them. If we cannot quite overcome, and stop the irregular Motions of our *Anger* presently, yet we may chuse whether we will give them our Allowance; we may disapprove and condemn them in our Thoughts, tho' we cannot presently get the perfect Mastery and Dominion over them. And if we will only do so much as *this*, we are in a fair way at *least* to be heal'd of our distemper'd Passion; and if we do not remit our Care, but still pursue our Contest with it, by the Grace of God and his Blessing on our Endeavours, we shall in a little while become more *than Conquerors over it*,

'Tis true indeed, there will be some Difference, in Point of Time, as to this Effect of subduing our Passion, arising, as I said before, from Mens different Humours and Constitutions. Some Mens Passions, for Instance, are pliable and easie, quickly turn'd, and set right again, and so the Resentment goes off with little, or no Reluctance. In others the Passions are more stiff and inflexible, and

E c 3 *this*



SERM. XV. *this* too from natural Causes and Complexion: And *here*, because there is more Resistance made, there will be the greater Difficulty to overcome. The *former* sort are in Reason and Conscience bound to a more immediate and speedy Reconciliation, because they are better capable of it: But in the *latter*, Reason and Time must work together, 'till the Passion comes to yield by degrees, and then breaks away it self. And because this State of Mind will not admit to have Arguments *thrust* upon it, they must therefore be gently and leisurely *insinuated*. The Sum of what I have said on this Point is *this*, that *all* Men are indispensably bound, by the Laws of *Christ*, to compose their Passions, and to forgive the Offences of others, within a very little time after they have suffered by them; and every particular Person must do it as soon as he can, as fast as his *Temper* and *Circumstances* will admit of.

But is there then no Distinction to be made here in point of Time, in regard to the Size and Quality of the Injuries that are done us? Are we not allow'd to maintain and keep up our Resentments for a greater Injury, longer than we may for a less? To which I answer, that we are allow'd indeed to be *more* angry for a greater Injury, but not *longer* so. As for the Degree and Measure of our Anger, when all other Circumstances will suffer it, we may proportion it to the Quality and Greatness of the Offence; but there is no Difference to be taken from thence as to the Duration of it. The *Apostle's* Rule is general, and without Reserve, *Let not the Sun*

go down upon your wrath; no Exception made SERM. XV.  
in the Rule, whether the Injury be less or greater, and therefore we must not make any in our *Life* and *Practice*.

And indeed to what purpose in Reason, and why, so much to our Disquiet, should we desire or be allow'd to keep up our Passion and Resentments longer, than till we can well remove them? For after all, let us cherish our Anger never so long, 'tis certain we are deny'd to execute it in any *revengeful* act at last; that by the Rules of *Christianity* being entirely forbidden us. And if we are not permitted to act our *Revenge* at all, why should we be fond of keeping up an impetuous, hungry, violent Desire within us, of that which is *totally* forbidden us under the severest Penalties. Now the \* Great *Philosopher* assures us, that all *Anger*, even in the very Nature of it, is attended with a present Desire of some *Revenge*. As long therefore, as we retain our *Anger*, and yet must not commit *Revenge*, we keep alive a *Vulture* within our Breasts, which we must *never* satisfy, and which will *therefore* only prey upon our own *Vitals*.

I have thus far consider'd this *Duty* of *Forgiveness*, as it respects only the *Inward* State and Disposition of our Mind.

I shall now go on to speak of it under the *Second* Notion, as it lays a Restraint upon our *Outward* Actions, and forbids us any manner of Injurious Return *whatever* in our Practice, For so far 'tis certain we are bound, by the

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\*Aristot, *Rhetor. lib. 2. cap. de ira.*

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general Tenour of the Gospel, and the particular Nature of this *Duty*, to do nothing out of a Principle of *Revenge*, that is, out of a Design of Hurt or Prejudice to our *Neighbour*, by way of Retaliation for any Evil or Inconvenience we may our selves have suffer'd at his Hands; In whatsoever Interest it be that we have suffer'd, though under the extremest Provocations, and the highest degree of Malice and Contempt.

*This*, perhaps, Men will say is a very severe *Commandment*, if it be so, and grates too harshly upon Flesh and Blood; 'Tis a hard saying, *who can bear it?* It may be so, but for all that 'tis true, and our *Duty*; 'tis the Doctrine of our *Lord and Saviour*, and what he practis'd himself; and dare we be offended at it? Men may possibly object against it indeed, and their Practice may give us too much Reason to think, they believe their own Objections; but this must be no Prejudice against an express Law of *Christ*, a clear *Duty* of the *Gospel*. And that *what* I am speaking of is *such*, and under this Explication of it, which I have given, we have as full and express Authority of *Christ* and his *Apostles* for it, as we have for any thing. *Resist not evil*, says our *Blessed Lord*; *Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you. Render not evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, Blessing*, says the *Apostle*; besides many other Passages to the same effect, which I need not here repeat; all which very plainly and openly prohibit a Man any manner of revengeful Return whatever, tho' under the forest Provocations.

Matth. 5. 32,  
44.

1 Pet. 3. 9.



cations. And the reason why they do so, is as SER M. XV.  
 clear; because *Vengeance* is a Right that God   
*Almighty* has reserv'd only to himself; and  
 therefore if we dare assume it, we invade his  
 Propriety. *Dearly beloved, avenge not your* Rom. 12. 19.  
*selves, but rather give place unto Wrath, for*  
*Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.*

In many cases indeed we are allow'd to  
 repair and redress an Injury, but in no case  
 must we return any; that is, we are permit-  
 ted often to seek our own Good, but not to  
 design the Evil of our Neighbour at any time;  
 and we may very well and easily do the *for-*  
*mer* of these, without the *latter*. For the  
 formal Reason of an Injury lies in *this*, in the  
 ill Design a Man conceives to hurt his Bro-  
 ther by any *outward* Action; but he that in-  
 tends merely to right or defend himself, if  
 the Cause be weighty enough, may do so very  
 lawfully, and without being really Injurious  
 to any one.

'Tis true indeed, another Man's great In-  
 convenience, and perhaps his Ruin, may fol-  
 low upon my Reparation of the Damage I  
 suffer by him; but upon a Supposition, that  
 the Loss and Mischief, I must otherwise lie  
 under, if I do not maintain and recover my  
 Right, be very considerable, though the Ruin  
 of my Adversary follow, 'tis not my Fault,  
 because 'twas not in my Design, and I would  
 have chosen to have secur'd my self, if possi-  
 ble, without the Trouble of my Neighbour.  
 So that tho' the Evils my Adversary suffers  
 be indeed the Consequence of my Action, yet  
 they do not come under the Nature and No-

tion

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tion of an Injury from me, because they were not so intended.

If the Damage indeed and Inconvenience, my Neighbour receives by my Action, done in pursuance of my Right, do very much overbalance the Advantage I can probably rective by the Reparation, *Christian Charity* would in this case, that if it be a Matter properly within a Man's own Power, I should bear with the Injury, rather than seek to right my self, so much to another's Prejudice.

But then, as I said, it must be in a Matter properly within a Man's own Power. For sometimes, whatsoever another Person may suffer by it, it may not be Lawful for a Man to recede from the least Right under his Protection, to prevent that Other's greatest Damage; and that which it is not lawful for a Man to do, in the Eye of the *Civil Law*, is not properly within his Power.

And thus 'tis in the case, where a Man is entrusted with the Rights of another under his Care; though the matter of Right it self, which lies in Debate, should prove very little, in comparison with what the Adversary, against whom 'tis maintain'd, or from whom the Satisfaction is demanded, may suffer by that Maintenance or Demand; yet let it be what it will, he must look to the Consequence. I must not falsify my Trust, that my unjust Adversary may not suffer. And thus, in this Case, it becomes Justice in me to Vindicate, what otherwise, if 'twere within my own Disposal, would be Mercy and Charity in me to *Forgive*. And thus, you see, how well, to all reasonable Purposes, an Injury

jury may very safely and innocently be repaired, and none ought ever to be in the least return'd.

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And if this Point were well consider'd, we should find room enough to right our selves, without being really Injurious to our Neighbour. And *where* Reason or Religion would allow a Man at any time to seek his Remedy, *there* he might have it without a Violation of his *Charity*; and in *other* Cases, if he will act like a good *Christian*, he must be content to forgive without one.

If *this* were rightly observ'd in our *Lawsuits*, and our Appeals about our Right to a determining Power, we should have a great deal more of Religion, and much less Quarrelling in the World. For in all these Cases we are not allow'd by the Laws of our *Religion* to do any thing out of an Intendment of Trouble and Vexation to our Neighbour, we are to act only for our own Defence and Vindication. And if it were not so, that we could refer our Differences to the Law without an Infringement of our *Christian Charity*, 'tis certain the *Law* would be good for nothing; because a *Man* could never *use* it lawfully. But *this* is not yet a perfect Notion of a *Christian's* Forgiveness, merely to do no Injury to his Neighbour: For,

*Thirdly*, A True *Christian* Forgiveness infers a perfect Good-will and Kindness to the Injurious Person, and a Readiness to do him all the Offices of Humanity and *Christian* Charity.

Not that, I think, the bare and strict Notion of *Forgiveness* in general, implies so much



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as *this*, but a *Christian* Forgiveness necessarily supposes it, as a true and genuine Consequence of it self, if it be sincere and real. For, because *Forgiveness* in general imports a Restoration of a Man to the same State and Disposition of Mind towards his Enemy, that he was in before the Injury, therefore a true *Christian* Forgiveness comes by Accident to have so close and inseparable a Connexion with Good-will and Charity; Because *this* is, or ought to be, the constant and standing Temper of our Minds towards every *Christian* whatsoever. Unless therefore a Man by his *Forgiveness* be restor'd to this Temper towards his Enemy, his *Forgiveness* cannot be real; because it does not return him to what, by the Laws of his Duty, he was suppos'd to have been before, that is, under a perfect Disposition of *Christian* Charity. So that, tho' the Notion of Kindness and Good-will, do not enter into the very Nature and Constitution of *Forgiveness*, they must however always attend it, in order to prove its Sincerity; and where we can say the *former* are not, we are sure the *latter* can't be.

And from hence I come to the *Third* and *Last* thing propos'd, which was to lay down some Rules for our better Direction, that we may not impose upon our selves in the Practice of this *Duty*, by vainly imagining we perform it, when indeed we do not.

Now the Rules that I shall mention upon this Occasion are *Negative*, and they are these *Two* that follow.

*First* then, It is certain we do not forgive our Enemy as we ought, from our Hearts and  
inmost

inmost Affections, howsoever we make a shift to smother and conceal our *Anger* for the present; if, when Time and Opportunity shall serve us upon him, our Resentment then return, and we any way express it to his Hurt or Dis-interest. For 'tis our *Duty* to kill, and not only to defer our *Revenge*, not to exchange the time for it, but entirely to root it up. 'Tis possible enough there may be an *outward appearing* Reconciliation between us and our Enemy, and we may not easily distrust it our selves at first, till by the Fruits we find the Insincerity and Rottenness of it; but if, under this State, when every thing shall seem fair and open between us and our Enemy, we shall yet close in with an Opportunity that is offer'd us of *smiting him secretly*, of taking away his good Name, or hurting him in any other of his Interests, tho' it may be, less dear to him than that; if we shall do this, and be pleas'd at the return of such Opportunities; Notwithstanding that we carry a fair Face towards him, does not *this* plainly betray a secret Disaffection to him still remaining in us? Does it not shew that the Wound was never perfectly heal'd, but only skinn'd over? and that the fiery *Coals* of our Resentment were still alive, and glowing under the deceitful Ashes of an outward false Behaviour? Surely it does; and God will never accept of *this*, for such a *Forgiveness*, as he himself has commanded in his Word, or *such*, as shall exempt us from his Displeasure. So *likewise shall my Heavenly Father*, *Matth. 18. 35.* says our Lord, *do also unto you*, that is, deliver us over to Condemnation, *if ye from your hearts*

SERM. XV. *hearts, forgive not every one his Brother their Trespases.*

The surest way then of judging of our Sincerity in the Performance of *this Duty*, and indeed of the constant Temper and Affections of our Soul in *any*, is, by observing *how* we behave our selves upon emergent Occasions. If, when we have it in our Power to do an Injury to our Enemy, and that perhaps so *secretly*, that he shall never know we did it; we yet restrain our selves and do it not, in vertue of this great and wise Reflection, *how shall I do this Wickedness, and sin against God!* This is such an Evidence to our selves that we are Sincere, as will strike us with a *secret Comfort*, that none but God and our own *Souls* are conscious of. But if we bear *any*, though but an *inferior* degree of *Malice* towards our Neighbour, though it be but a *little one*, a close, a secret Reserve of Ill-will; it will be sure in time to discover it self, and the secret Lees of Corruption, that lurks within our Hearts, will be restlessly working, and ever now and then throwing up a Bitterness and Indisposition upon our Spirit towards him.

And this not seldom happens, for this reason; because we did not begin to work with our Resentments at first upon a true and sufficient Foundation; but it may be, set our selves to still and quiet our present Passion, upon reasons of our Fear, our Temporal Interest, our Reputation, or the like incompetent Principles; from which as soon as ever we break loose, our Passion revives again, and then the *Vengeance* shews it self, which  
had



had been all the while sculking at the bottom of our Hearts.

For such Arguments, as those I mention'd, don't go deep enough upon the Heart to cleanse it thoroughly, and to make a perfect and thorow change of it, and to reach all the secret Corners, and Retirements of Corruption in it. Nothing can do that but the word of *Psalm* 19. 7. God, that Word which is perfect and converteth the Soul, which is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edge'd Sword, and pierceth to the dividing asunder the Soul and Spirit, the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart. *Heb.* 4. 12.

So that if we would effectually cure our Repentments, and not only silence and lay them for the present, if we would prevent the ill Fruits and Sproutings of them afterwards in our Conversation, let us be sure to strike at them in their first Foundation and Principle; let us lay the axe to the root and bottom of the Tree, proceed against them by Arguments that will entirely overturn them Root and Branch, and leave no Principle of Corruption behind, to give them a new Spring and Recovery for ever hereafter.

Again, Secondly, We may certainly know we do not forgive our Enemy as we should, and from the bottom of our Hearts, though we take care to restrain our Passion from any outward Injurious Act towards him, if yet we take a silent Pleasure in his Misfortunes, and rejoice at the Calamities that befall him otherwise; if, though we spare him our selves, we are yet glad to find him suffer from the Injuries of others, if we love to see him run down in

SERM. XV. in his Estate, Interest, or Reputation, and to fall and sink into the Dust before us; If, I say, we can take delight in such a View as this, then as *surely as Christianity is true, and Forgiveness is our Duty*, we do not forgive our Enemy, but take out our *Revenge* upon him, by the Hands of others, and by those Instruments without us that afflict him.

For next to that of doing Mischief *our selves*, there is no more certain Token of a base, invenom'd and canker'd Spirit, towards another Man, than to rejoice in the Success of Evil upon him from *Abroad*. The Law of *Forgiveness* indeed is so very express and peremptory, and charg'd so home upon the Consciences of Men, that a Man can hardly find in his Heart to make an *evil* Return equal to a strong and high Resentment, but he must fly in the Face of his own Convictions, and secretly and severely reproach and censure himself for it: Because that is so very open a Violation of a great and known *Law*, that it leaves no Refuge for a Man to screen himself behind it, from the Rebukes and Lashes of his own *Mind*. And therefore this may oftentimes bind up a Man's own Hands, and restrain him from doing that Evil himself, which yet he would be glad to see.

But if my Enemy comes to suffer without my Fault, if the Hand of Providence shall strike him, or the Consequences of his own Folly overtake him, perhaps to his Ruin, may not I then be allow'd to take out my Satisfaction upon him, when 'tis thus without my Guilt? For surely, what harm can there be for me to strike in with the Issues of Providence,

vigilance, and to rejoice to find Sin and Folly receive a just Discountenance from Heaven, in the ill Effects that follow them? This indeed is a very *specious* Plea, and 'tis possible many a Man may impose upon himself and others by it; but 'tis a very false, ill natur'd one for all that, and proceeds from a Base, Uncharitable, *Unchristian* Temper of Soul at the Bottom; and God sees it does so, and if we act according to it, he will be sure to place it to the account of our Sins. In the mean time, very likely we may applaud our selves in it, and look upon our selves as good *Husbands* in our *Revenge*; as if, by this Method of proceeding, we could gratifie our malicious Relentment at none of our own Charge. But if we will only consider with our selves a little, don't we know that 'tis at the Expence of our *Christian* Charity, that we are thus placing our selves in our Brother's Sufferings? And if we can think a little ill-natur'd Pleasure a good Purchase, at so dear a rate as that, we may do so; but 'tis our great Sin if we do, and will be our great Unhappiness.

*God Almighty* therefore commands us, and the nature of a true *Christian Forgiveness* expects from us, a Frame and Temper of Mind towards our Enemy quite different from this; That we should indeed ease his Pains, and lighten his Burden as much as we can, but not make his Afflictions our Sport and Pleasure, and Triumph and Insult upon him while he is labouring under them. This is contrary to the very Charity of a *Jew*; and how then can we think it consistent with the Mercy and



SERM. XV. *Forgiveness of a Christian. Rejoice not when, thine Enemy falleth, says Solomon, nor let thine Heart be glad when he stumbleth, lest the Lord see it, and it displease him, and he turn away his Wrath from him.* 'Tis a Sin, it seems, of a very provoking Nature to do thus, and such as will turn the Anger of God from our Enemy, against our selves.

'Tis no more than an Instance of common Charity, not to rejoice in the Evils and Sufferings of Men; and can we think the *Forgiveness* of a Christian real, that shall allow of this? Upon what Grounds and Principles, or according to what *Divinity*, can we pretend to think so? The *Forgiveness* and Love of our *Enemies* were ever yet look'd upon as the very Height and Perfection of *Christian* Charity; and can *these*, think we, be Sincere, and yet defective in one of the *lowest* Instances of Charity, such as the not rejoicing in the Calamities and Misfortunes of other Men? And therefore, if we will pretend we Love and Forgive our Enemies, and at the same time can take Delight to see them miserable, 'tis certain, that we have found out such a Scheme of *Morality* to our selves, that the World was never yet acquainted with, and are in a very fair way towards reconciling Contradictions.

And *thus* I have gone through every Part of my Proposal, by removing and preventing, under the *first Head*, the strongest Objection that I was sensible would lie against this *Duty* of *Forgiveness*; by explaining the Nature of it under the *Second*; and under the *Last*, by prescribing some Rules for the Trial of our *Practice*.

And

And now, after all that can be said, How little is this *great* Commandment of our Blessed Lord and Saviour regarded in the World! And how infinitely short does it fall of its due Force and Influence upon the Lives of Men! Men, that acknowledge the Purity and Holiness, the Weight and Authority of the Precept; nay, and own the Necessity of conforming to it in general, have yet one way or other found out an unhappy shift of turning off the force of it from themselves: Whether it be, that they don't consider it enough, or understand it aright, or, which is more probable, vainly presume upon God's Mercy to themselves, however they fail in a due Subjection and Obedience to it.

*Others* there are, surely Men of too high Spirits to be Christians! who dare confront this Sovereign Law of their *God* and *Saviour*, to the Face; spurn at the Duty it self, as a base and low-spirited Quality, unworthy of a *Gentleman*, and set up other standing Rules and Measures of acting to themselves, a false and foolish Honour, and I know not what vain Principles, to oppose it.

But that we may not be too much surpris'd at this, we may consider, that though the *Laws of Christ* contain within themselves the most powerful Arguments and Motives to Obedience that are possible; though the *Gospel* of our *Saviour* be really in it self, what the Great *Apostle* styles it, the *Power of God unto Salvation*, yet if Men will not consider and attend to their *Duty*, and the Consequences of their own Actions, there is no Remedy.

SERM. XV. God lays no Force or Violence upon any Man's Will; but let these Men look to it, he will be sure to meet them all hereafter, and reckon severely with them in *another* World, for all their Affronts to himself, Contempt of his Laws, and rejecting the *Authority* of his Son's Commandments in *this*.

*Plain*  
 I say of Laws contain within themselves the  
 powerful Arguments and Motives to O-  
 bedience that are possible, though the Obedi-  
 ence of our Saviour be really in a self, who the  
 Great Apostle calls the Power of God unto  
 Salvation: yet if Man will disobey him, and  
 attend to their Duty, and the Commandments  
 of their own Actions, there is no remedy.  
 For that we may not be too much surpris'd  
 at this, we may consider, that though the  
 Laws of God contain within themselves the  
 this Principle to operate.  
 and Motives of Obedience to themselves, as this  
 Gentlemen, and let us, after reading James  
 but not lowly think of Obedience, unworthy of a  
 to the Law, upon the Day is left as a  
 this Sovereign Law of their God and Saviour,  
 Spirit to the Christians, who dare condemn  
*Plain*



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*Plain Dealing, Zeal and Integrity; the indispensable Duty of the Christian Ministry, in times of Danger and Corruption; and the best Means to secure the Honour and Reputation of their Sacred Order.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the  
University on *Act-Sunday*,

July 8, 1711.

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2 Cor. IV. 1, 2.

*Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have receiv'd mercy we faint not; But have renoanc'd the hidden things of dishonesty, nor walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the Truth, commending our selves to every Man's conscience in the sight of God.*

**T**HESE Words are a very close and useful Consequence drawn from the Apostle's Argument in the former Chapter, where he had been settling the great Perfection and Advantages of the Gospel Ministration, in point of Spiritual Privileges,

F f 3

SERM. XVI. *vileges, above those of Moses's Law.* Amongst the other noble Characters of Excellence, which he gives the *Gospel* above the *Legal Dispensation*, that which comes more immediately home to my *Text*, is *this*, that the Truths and Doctrines of *Christianity* are reveal'd with the greatest Plainness and Simplicity, with which the *Law* was not: That the great things it teaches are express'd in the most clear and open manner, not wrapt up in the Obscurity, nor clogg'd with the Incumbrance of *Ritual* and *Ceremonial* Observances, but plain and easie to the first Apprehensions of Men, and need no *other* Light to approve their Use and Excellence to the general Reason of Mankind, than *what* they carry with them. Whereas in the *other* case the *vail*, that was put on *Moses's* Face, was a mystical Representation of that covering of Darkness that lay upon the true *spiritual* Intention of the *Law*, and upon the Hearts of those that liv'd under the *Mosaical OEconomy*.

2 Cor. 3. 13.

2 Cor. 3. 18.

But now, says the *Apostle*, by way of contradiction to the *Law*, *we all*, that is, all Christians, with open Face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are chang'd in the same image; from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord; That is, we have now so clear Representations of *God's* Nature and Will made to us in the *Gospel* of our *Saviour*; we have our Duty set before us in so full a light, and our Sins press'd by such powerful Convictions on our Consciences, that by the Assistance of *God's* Grace and *Holy Spirit*, we cannot fail of being Reform'd by this means, if we faithfully apply our own Endeavours.

From

From whence the *Apostle* concludes, that there could be no way to recommend the *Gospel* of *Christ* so effectually, as to preach it as it was, in its own true, natural, unaffected State; and that whosoever should go about to put any false Colours or Disguises on it, would only throw a slur and diminution upon its native Lustre.

This Conclusion of his he expresses before my *Text*, in the 12th verse of the former Chapter, in these words, *seeing then that we have such hope*, that is, such a full Satisfaction of the excellent Nature and Advantages of the *Gospel* Ministration, *we use great plainness of speech*; he means, in the Proposal and Promulgation of it; And then he comes and tells us in the words of my *Text*, that this was not only his present Resolution, to deal thus plainly in the execution of his Ministry, but that, when he look'd back upon his former Practice, he could not remember that he had ever done otherwise. *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry, as we have receiv'd Mercy we faint not, but have renounc'd the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth, commending our selves to every mans conscience in the sight of God.*

The words may be very easily resolv'd into this plain Paraphrase, which follows;

*Since we have receiv'd an Office of Ministry, of so great Excellence and Dignity in its Nature, in the performance of which we are to deliver to the World Truths of the highest Moment and Importance; such Truths, which the more*



plainly they are reported, shine with the greater Conviction, and are like to have the more powerful influence upon the Hearts of Men: Though the impartial execution of this our Office, by reason of Mens Vices and Corruptions, may sometimes prove dangerous to our present Safety, and destructive of our Worldly Interests; yet, through the support of God's Grace and Mercy, we are not binder'd by any Discouragements of this nature; But, as we are not sensible, we do at present, or have ever acted upon any sinister oblique temporary Respects, for our own Advancement or Promotion, so neither have we stood in need, of any of those shuffling Artifices, or base Compliances, which some other Men make use of, to conceal or promote our own Designs, or to varnish and colour over our Pretences; But we dare openly appeal, for the Soundness of our Doctrine, and for our Integrity in delivering it, to the Consciences of Men, as those who speak in the presence of the God of Truth, whose gracious Designs for the good of Mens Souls, is the great Business of our Sacred Calling, and what we have solemnly undertaken to promote.

This, St. Paul, you see, declares to have been his Practice; I shall endeavour in the following Discourse to prove it to be no less our Duty; and shall shew in the

First Place, That an open, fearless, unreserv'd Representation of the Truths and Doctrines of our Religion, whatever Dangers or Inconveniencies may attend it, is nevertheless the Duty of the Christian Ministry, most agreeable to the design and nature of the Gospel, which they Teach, and the main Point, in which consists the right, and impartial

Execu-

Execution of their Office: Which, I think, *SER. M. XVI*  
 is a *Proposition* very clearly drawn out of the  
 words of my *Text* taken all together.

*Secondly*, I shall enquire what peculiar  
 Temptations and Difficulties there are, that  
 lie in the way of our *Sacred Office*, that so  
 many have fail'd in the right Performance of  
 this *Duty*: so that even the *great Apostle*  
 himself look'd upon it as no less than the  
 Mercy of God, that he himself had not  
 swerv'd in that particular: *Therefore seeing*  
*we have this Ministry, as we have receiv'd*  
*mercy, we faint not.*

*Thirdly*, I shall try to lay before you some-  
 what a more particular Account, of the Na-  
 ture and Description of those irregular and  
 sinful Motives and Methods of declining from  
 the Duties of our *Sacred Profession*, which the  
*Apostle* here taxes under the infamous Cha-  
 racter of *bidden things, of dishonesty*, such base,  
 unworthy Principles and Proposals, as cannot  
 bear the just Reproach of being in the *Light*;  
 and therefore very conveniently shelter, and  
 hide themselves under the vain Protection of  
 Disguise, and false Pretences: By which Men  
 are yet tempted to prevaricate with their *Du-  
 ty*, and are fain to make use of Artifice, and  
 Craft, and Violence upon the word of God it-  
 self, to screen themselves, and escape from  
 the Shame and Apprehensions of the World:  
 All which both Principles and Practices, the  
*Apostle* assures us, 'twas his great Concern and  
 Conscience to avoid: *But have receiv'd the*  
*bidden things of dishonesty, not making in craft*  
*iness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully.*

*Fourthly*,

SERM. XVI.

*Fourthly, and Lastly, By way of Conclusion, I shall observe from my Text, That a steady, resolv'd, uniform Maintenance of the Rules and Principles of Christianity, by the Ministry of it, is the only true way, at last, to consult their own Honour and Reputation, and that of the Religion they profess.--- By manifestation of the truth, commending our selves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

A Discourse upon this Subject, and to this Purpose, may not perhaps be altogether unnecessary to vindicate the Practice and Behaviour of a small Number of Men amongst us, whose just Zeal, in the late times of *Danger*, has been censured by those who would be thought *wiser* Men, and we are sure took care to be more safe, as rash and singular, and out of *Season*. In direct Contradiction to the Resolutions and Practice of these Men, I shall endeavour from the Words of my *Text* to prove in the

*First Place*, that an open, fearless, unreserv'd Representation of the *Truths* and *Doctrines* of our *Religion*, whatever Dangers or Inconveniencies may attend it, is nevertheless the *Duty* of the *Christian Ministry*, most agreeable to the Design and Nature of the *Gospel*, which they teach, and the main *Point* in which consists the right and impartial Execution of their *Office*. For, is it not the very end of the *Christian Revelation* to ripp up the Sores, and to lay open the Corruptions of Men to the Bottom, to search all Designs, to unmask all Disguises, and to sift all Pretences, and to make every Man truly sensible what he is, and what he ought to be?



I am sure the *Apostle* thought so, when he SERM. XVI. tells us in his *Epistle* to the *Hebrews*, *The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper* Heb. 4. 12. *than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerners of the thoughts, and intents of the heart.* When the Duties of Religion are press'd upon the Minds of Men with the same Freedom and Severity, they stand reveal'd in the *Holy Scriptures*, they are so lively and convictive, and strike with so powerful and awful a *Light* upon the Conscience, that the Sinner has no *Covering of Darkness*, where to hide himself, nor any Refuge, where to escape from the Rebukes and Censures of his own Mind.

And herein 'tis, the *Gospel* proves to be, what the *Apostle* styles it, *the power of God unto salvation*; for this very Reason, which he gives us himself, because *therein the wrath* Rom. 1. 18 *of God is so plainly revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* Which was the great Argument why *St. Paul* assures us, he was not *ashamed of the* Rom. 1. 16. *Gospel of Christ*; because he knew it was so admirably well qualify'd to fulfil its own Design.

But now, if, when the Sins and Corruptions of Men call out aloud upon us to speak freely in behalf of Religion and the Truth, we are then silent, and afraid to assert our own Doctrine, upon the Account of those Difficulties, and Disadvantages we must expect to meet with, from a *World*, which we are sure to *provoke and engage*, while we endeavour to *reform* it; if the Impudence and  
Out-

SERM. XVI. Outrageousness of Mens Sins shall strike a mortal Chill and Damp, upon the Forwardness of our Zeal, at the very time, when 'tis the most proper Season for it to bestir itself, to be most vigorous and active, we then disappoint the noble Remedies, which the Gospel has provided for the Distempers of Mankind, of their design'd Effect; we conceal and stifle the greatest publick Blessing, that ever was discover'd; and may well be said to be ashamed of that Gospel our selves, whose Honour and Reputation, in the Recovery it would make upon Mankind, we thus oppress in secret. And then Our Blessed Lord will tell us, what just and heavy Doom attends our Sloth and Prevarication for such a Practice. *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in the glory of his Father and of the holy Angels.*

Mark 8. 38.

Our Lord, we see, supposes the Age, in which the Proposals of his Doctrine were to be made, might be as corrupt and loose as could well be imagin'd; for which Reason he styles it an *adulterous generation*, that is, a Race of Men quite gone off, and estrang'd from their vow'd Duty and Obligations to Almighty God, prostitute to Vice, and perfectly lost and profligate as to all Principles of Goodness and Religion? And yet as bad as it might be, and we are assur'd it was, in the time of his own Life, and after, do we find, that he gives the Apostles and Ministers of his Doctrine any Dispensation to be safe and silent in such an Age as this? Does he  
allow

allow them to secure their *worldly* Interests, SERM. XVI.  
 at the Neglect of their *religious* Duty; and  
 to reserve themselves for better Times, in  
 connivance at the Corruptions of the pre-  
 sent? that is, in short, Does he give them  
 leave to *lay aside the Commandments of God*, in  
 compliment to the Sins of Man? No: But  
 though he knew they must draw the Hatred  
 and Opposition of the World against them,  
 if they would be faithful in the Discharge of  
 their sacred Office; tho' he was sensible, that  
 Mens Resentments would rise, and their In-  
 dignation storm against those that should re-  
 buke them for their Vices, and by that means  
 lay them under the Reproach and Censure  
 of former Folly; yet, for all this, he does  
 not make the least Abatement of their Duty,  
 for any Danger they might run in the Exe-  
 cution of it; but referring them for their Se-  
 curity to his own Providence and Protecti-  
 on, in the way he bids them go, he com-  
 mands them to exert their utmost Zeal and  
 Activity in the Cause of his Truth and Ho-  
 nour, with a Promise *hereafter to reward* them  
 for it.

This was the true State of primitive Zeal  
 and Fervour of Spirit, in the Prosecution of  
 their Office, which our *Blessed Lord* requir'd,  
 and his first Followers practis'd.

But now, if we will admit of the more  
*soft and favourable* Doctrines, and *dispensing*  
 Interpretations of our Duty, as to the Points  
 of venturing for our Religion, in these *modern*  
 Ages; especially, if we'll form our Judgment  
 by the Principles and Practice of our *own*;  
 "Why, then, the *Apostles* and primitive  
 "Chri-



SERM. XVI

“ Christians were extremely out, in running  
 “ those Hazards of Suffering for their Do-  
 “ ctrine, which they might have as well a-  
 “ voided: For why would they go to ex-  
 “ pose themselves so unnecessarily? And what  
 “ Good could they hope to do by it, when  
 “ the Interest and Prejudices of Men were  
 “ so violently set against them, and would  
 “ be sure to barr up all the ways of Instructi-  
 “ on, and render the Reformation of the  
 “ World, in the highest Degree improbable?  
 “ ’Tis true, in some time, when the Heat  
 “ of Opposition might be a little slack’d and  
 “ abated, Men might possibly *then* be in-  
 “ clin’d to attend, with some Patience, and  
 “ Calmness to the Proposals of a *Doctrine*, which  
 “ they would only *now* reject with Resent-  
 “ ment and Reproach; and therefore ’twas  
 “ only prostituting the Truth, and them-  
 “ selves, to the Wildness and Fury of an en-  
 “ rag’d Multitude, to endeavour thus un-  
 “ seasonably to *thrust* their Doctrine upon the  
 “ Minds of Men, when, ’twas plain, the ge-  
 “ neral Consent and Practice was against it!  
 “ Or if some Body must needs appear, to  
 “ give a Check to the Tide of general Cor-  
 “ ruption, yet why Men of such mean Ca-  
 “ pacities, and slender Endowments, as *the*  
 “ *first Preachers* were? Some of whom might  
 “ prejudice the Cause for want of *Dis-*  
 “ *cretion*; others, for want of *Resolution*, might  
 “ betray it. So that the most *prudent* way  
 “ were to be quiet, to let things go on as  
 “ they did, and since we had no Hand in  
 “ the Corruptions of the World, we might  
 “ even be content not to meddle to *reform*  
 “ them.

These,

July VIII. 1711.

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These, and a great many more such *vain* SERM. XVI.  
Excuses that I *could* mention, and which we  
have, not so long since, seen exemplified in  
*Practice*, are the fond *Apologies* of a *Luke-*  
*warm* undisciplin'd Soul, to palliate and hide  
a timorous and cowardly Temper; contriv'd  
on Purpose, in times of *general Apostacy*, to  
exempt a Man from appearing *singular*, and  
to reconcile a present Interest and a quiet  
Conscience, when *Sufferings* become his Duty.

If *these* had been the Resolutions of Men  
in the first Ages of *Christianity*, very proba-  
bly we had never heard of it, it would have  
sunk in its *Infancy*, and gone out of the  
World as *quietly*, as bad Men desir'd it should  
have done, to the unspeakable Loss, and Un-  
happiness of Mankind.

And (to come a little nearer to our *own* Case  
at home) if *these* Sentiments had universal-  
ly prevail'd amongst our selves; If there had  
been no true *Sons* of our own excellent *Mo-*  
*ther the Church of England*, amongst all the  
Children *that she had brought up*, who, in *Isa. 51. 18.*  
the late time of a pestilent and prevailing  
*Faction*, the Days not only of her *Danger*, but  
almost her *Destruction*, that had been prompt-  
ed by a noble generous and courageous  
*Zeal*, to take her by the Hand, to assert her  
Honour in the midst of her *enemies in the gate*, *Psal. 127. 5.*  
and to vindicate their own Relation to her,  
through all the Infamy, that was thrown up-  
on *her*, and upon *them* for *her* sake; by this  
time, very probably some Men would have  
begun to apprehend, too late, that their  
Blame of other Mens true Concern for  
their *Church and Religion* was as much with-  
out

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out Reason, as their own want of it in themselves was, and is still without Excuse.

Ephes. 6. 11.

'Tis very strange that any, especially the Ministers of Religion, who take upon themselves the whole armour of God, and are justly suppos'd to be the best skill'd, as well as most engag'd in the *Spiritual Warfare*, should then think it a time to lay by their Weapons, when their Enemies were most vigorous and active, and just at the Gates of their Holy City, which themselves were the Persons to defend. That, which the Men of this Temper bring as an Argument to excuse their want of Activity at such a time as this, may be turn'd against them, as the best Reason in the World for it: Because there was so strong a Confederacy and Assembly of the Enemies of God, and Religion against the Church; for that very Reason, surely, 'twas the proper Time and Occasion to awake, and stand up in its Defence, thro' all Objections of Danger and Difficulty that could be offer'd: Which, upon this Supposition only, that Men ought to have a more tender Regard to the Prosperity of Religion, and the Care of their Duty, than to their own secular Ease and Interests, immediately vanish and come to nothing: Which yet, surely, is a Principle, that, I suppose, no Man will deny in Theory, howsoever he may contradict it in his Practice. How then, can those Men who are set for the Guard of Religion be excus'd, if by their Inattendants and Negligence, they suffer the Adversaries of Truth to break in and rife her, while in the meantime they are only providing for their own Security



Security, and every Man is looking for his Gain SERM. XVI.  
from his Quarter?

Besides, what an Encouragement is *this* to wicked and villainous Designs, when, in a loose and degenerate Age, the Men of *corrupt* Minds shall be so busily employ'd in beating down the Principles of *Holiness* and *Piety*; and *those* who are *most* concern'd shall be so very *cautious* how they appear against them, because 'tis dangerous, and they may happen to *provoke*; *provoke* whom? why the Enemies of God, and of his *Truth*; those whom we ought to hate as *Holy David* did, with a Psal. 139. 22. *perfect hatred*, and to desire their utmost Malice and Vengeance to hurt us, whilst we stand upon the Defence, and Maintenance of our *Duty*.

But 'tis possible, that we may come to suffer by this Means; and should not a Man of *Prudence* be careful to avoid *that*? Ay, there lies the *Objection*: They may persecute, and afflict us, and bring us before their *Judgment Seats*; and does not our *Blessed Saviour* himself advise us to *beware of Men*, in such a Case? Yes he does; but 'tis, I hope, when we have *first* done our *Duty*, which his Commands will never justify us in declining, otherwise than upon that Reason. And in the very same Place he encourages us to be unconcern'd at the worst of *Usage* that may happen to us, in the Pursuit of our *Office*; and when we have done all we can, and have been brought before councils, for his *name's* Mat. 10. 17, 18. *sake*, and for a *Testimony* against *them*, and the *Gentiles*; then comes in the proper Opportunity for taking his Advice, with as much

SER. M. XVI. Innocence as we can to elude the Malice, and disappoint the revengeful Designs of wicked Men: And if we must suffer at last, 'tis given us as an Honour, and the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon us, to support, and to reward us: And where are we then the Losers!

1 Pet. 4. 14.

But for Men, when the Cause of Religion is under Tryal, and ready to sink for want of a Support, then to wrap themselves in their own Slab and Security, and to have their Heads and Hearts employ'd only in forecasting a Refuge for themselves, and how to keep out of Harm's way; if this be not cursed Hypocrisie, or base Cowardice, or timorous Infidelity, then, I will venture to say, 'tis impossible to define what is so.

Mark 8. 35.

And what great Advantage do these wise Men make of it after all, who are so very re-  
ferr'd, and wonderfully cautious of offending a Combination of powerful Sinners? Why, they come off with no Honour at all, and not with greater Safety at last, than a resolute, bold, and honest Man; so true is that of our Blessed Saviour, *whosoever will save his Life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it*; not only with respect to a future Exchange, in another World, which, we are sure, will be infinitely advantageous, but even with regard to a Man's present Interest in this; for *there is no Man, says Christ, that has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, (we may observe that) houses, and brethren,*

Mark. 10. 29.  
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brethren, and sisters, and mother and children, SERM. XVI.  
and lands with persecutions, and in the world to  
come Life everlasting; that is, he shall gain a  
greater Interest and find more Friends, even  
in this World, for standing up for God's Ho-  
nour, and that of Religion, than he can lose  
by it; tho', at the same time, he may be ha-  
ted, envy'd, and malign'd for it by Men of an  
opposite Interest.

So that an honest, upright, undefigning Man  
may happen to come off as well, it seems, e-  
ven as to this World, which yet one would  
hardly think, as the most projecting self-de-  
signing, crafty Hypocrite. And when this  
comes to be the Case indeed, that a good Man's  
Integrity has been tried to the utmost, and  
found superior to all the Methods and Ma-  
lice of his Enemies, then, to be sure, none  
so ready to run in, and compliment, and con-  
gratulate, and triumph, as these safe cauti-  
ous Men themselves; who, while his Cause  
was in Danger, lurk'd behind, and suspected  
every thing he did, and could see Reasons of  
Impeachment in every Line he wrote, and  
find out Reflections upon Great Men, where,  
perhaps, they were never intended. In short,  
we have seen the Day, when Men of our  
own Order have been asham'd of an upright,  
forward, zealous Brother, while his Princi-  
ples were under a publick Discountenance;  
and many a one ready to say of him as Levi  
is represented by Moses to have done of his  
own Kindred, tho' in a very different Sense,  
*I have not seen him, neither did he acknowledge  
his Brethren;* and could almost thank God  
they were under no Obligation to express

Deut. 33. 9<sup>th</sup>



SERM. XVI. *their Consent to the Words and Actions of an honest Man.*

I am sure, this way of *shifting* for our selves, when God's Truth and holy Religion are suffering, can find nothing either of Practice, or Precept, throughout the whole *Book of God*, to countenance it. If some good and Holy Men, in the Days of old, ever stept out of the way, from the Malice of their *Persecutors*, 'twas then, when they had answer'd first their utmost Duty, and had protested against the Evil of their Times, and so had blown up the Rage and Malice of *Tyrants*, and *Enemies to Truth*, by severe Rebukes and Remonstrances against their Practice; which was all certainly, that any Man can think they were bound to do, in pursuance of God's Commission to them. And thus we are inform'd, *Moses* did, and so did *Elijah*; and some others that we meet with in *Holy Writ*; who yet we find were never tax'd for it; and why? because they acted by the Rules of a just, and truly religious *Prudence*.

Gen. 2. 15.

1 Kings 19. 3.

And as we have no warrantable *Example* of such Reserve, and shuffling in the Word of God, so I can think but of one Text in the whole Bible, that seems any way, to look with the least favourable Aspect upon that Practice: 'Tis in the 5th Chapter of the Prophet *Amos* at the 13th Verse, where, speaking of the Sinfulness and Danger of the Times, the Prophet infers thus; *Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time*; the only Text some Men seem to have been commenting upon, for some Years past; but 'tis capable, I hope, of a better Interpretation,

ration, than they have given it in their Practice: *Which* indeed is this, (as it very plainly appears from the *Context*) that in a time of such *Oppression*, and publick *Injustice*, as *that* was, when Men lay upon the *catch* to vex and harass one another, a *wise* Man would keep out of the way, as much as he could with *Innocence*, and give no Man a *Personal* Provocation to molest and grieve him; since Men were so ready to take all Opportunities of doing so, without *any*: For thus the *Verse* before informs us; *they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate from their right*; and then immediately follow the Words I mention'd: But that the *Prophet* should ever mean by *these* Words, that when the publick and private State of *Religion* and *Truth* should be thus far overturn'd, it should be a *wise* and a *good* Man's Part and *Duty* to stand by, and say nothing, is, I think, such an Interpretation, as no Man would easily make or allow, but he that has *Honesty* little enough to put it in Practice. We are sure *this* was not the *Prophet's* own way of acting; and therefore 'tis very unlikely it should be his Advice. We know how he protested against the Vices of a *prophane, Idolatrous* Court, with Vehemence, and was *accus'd* for it, I don't say *impeach'd*, by that *Apostate infamous Priest* of *Bethel*, *A-maziab*, in these Words, *O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesie there, but prophesie not again any more at Bethel, for 'tis the King's chappel, and it is the King's court*: In Answer to which the *Fervent Prophet* asserts his *Di-*

Amos 5. 13.

Amos 7. 12. 13

SERM. XVI. vine Authority and Resolution to do as he  
 had done: *The Lord took me,* says he, *as I*  
*Amos 7. 15.* *follow'd the Flock; and the Lord said unto me,*

*go prophesie unto my People Israel.* And so must  
 we do in like manner, we must assert our sa-  
 cred Ministry, whatever Checks we meet  
 with for it, we must persist in a resolv'd, o-  
 pen way of declaring the whole Truth of God,  
 without Reserve, Disguise, or Concealment,  
 whenever Religion comes to be under a Dis-  
 countenance, or in Danger from the Vices,  
 or bad Principles of wicked Men; and that,  
 whatever we may be threatened with, or suf-  
 fer for it, if we desire to be found true to our  
 great Master's Commission, or will answer the  
 most important Trust he has repos'd in us,  
 for the Benefit, and Salvation of Men's Souls,

*I come now to enquire in the Second place,*  
 what peculiar Temptations and Difficulties  
 there are, that lie in the way of our Sacred  
 Office, that so many have fail'd in the Per-  
 formance of this Duty; that even the great  
 Apostle St. Paul look'd upon it, as no less than  
 the Mercy of God, that himself had not swerv'd  
 in that particular. *Therefore seeing we have*  
*this Ministry, as we have received Mercy we faint*  
*not.*

Now the Temptations that are peculiar to  
 us of the Clergy, above other Men, are these,  
 That we are many times oblig'd to renounce,  
 and not value the Favour and Displeasure of  
 Men, of whatsoever Order or Character they  
 may be, in the faithful Discharge of our Of-  
 fice, and yet lie more expos'd to be influenc'd  
 by the Effects of their Kindness or Frowns,  
 than others do.



If there be any thing of publick Mischief SERM. XVI  
going on against Religion and the Truth, to  
be sure, the *Ministers* of Religion, who pre-  
side over its Interests and Safety, and must  
give an Account, as far as it falls within their  
Direction, of the Declension or Advance-  
ment of it, stand the Mark and Aim of the  
Spight and Malice of the Men of no Religi-  
on; and if possible, are either to be remov'd  
out of the way, or render'd as insignificant  
as may be, that they may put in no Bar, nor  
give any Disturbance to the Dispatch of these  
Men's *unrighteous* Designs. Or if a Man of  
our Order should happen to prove a little  
more troublesome to such Mens Interests and  
Projects, by a bold undaunted protesting a-  
gainst their Transgressions himself, and alarm-  
ing the Apprehensions of others to mark  
their *oblique* Proceedings; why then, nothing  
less than Fury and Ruin denounc'd upon him  
in a Moment. The *Grand Cabal* of *Politici-  
ans* is summon'd, in Order to advise, *what* Ester 6. 6.  
*shall be done to the Man* that seems to pay  
God more Honour, than to themselves; whom  
for that very Reason they delight to ruin;  
and after mature debate, from this pious As-  
sembly, out comes a Resolution at last, with  
a *Curse*, to crush him!

And, as a true faithful *Embassador* of Christ  
is sure to meet with Wrath and Persecution  
enough from his *Enemies*, the old Serpent,  
and his *Adherents*; so when he has done his  
Duty, and ventur'd his utmost in Pursuance of  
his Conscience, and in Defence of the Principles  
of his Religion and the Government, 'tis a

SERM. XVI. Hazard if he be not laid by, at last, and neglected by his *Friends*.

*Ecclef. 9. 15,*  
16.

And there is not in every one of our *Order* that Strength of Judgment, and Firmness of Will to despise these Discouragements, and to rest himself satisfy'd in the Applauses of his own Mind and Conscience. And therefore 'tis, that, under these uncomfortable Reflections on both sides, in regard to *Friends*, as well as *Enemies*, we have seen so many Persons of our own *Order* (the greater is the Shame) in these late Years, throw up their Arms, and settle themselves in more easie Resolutions, than to maintain such a stated War, and perpetual Contentions against the *Enemies of Religion and Truth*, without any Encouragement, when they saw others make their own Advantage by a shorter *Method*.

And when Men have *once* yielded to this Temper, *then* they have given these outward Temptations a firm Hold, and Possession of their Heart; and *then* the *Terrors* and *Favours of the World*, that threaten them on the *hardest* side, and court them on the *softest*, come to have the perfect *Sway* of their Actions; and may be said to be the two great *Engines*, especially when represented by the Hands of Men in *Power*, whereby the *Devil* makes an Interest in the *Church*, against it self; and by taking hold of the *Ambition*, or the *Fears* of Clergymen, as he knows very well how to adapt his Arguments to different Tempers, he comes to unsettle the Foundations, and disparage the Profession of *God's Holy Truth*, by the *Hands*, or with the *Consent* of those very Men, that wear the *Badges of Religion*,  
and

and are *most* concern'd, in common Prudence, SERM. XVI  
as well as Duty, to support it.

And is not *this* the noblest Triumph of Vice and Impiety? In which our crafty *Politicians* think they have reason to pride themselves much, and exalt their own Wisdom, and despise Religion to the *Ground*, when they can thus allure, and draw over the chief Ministers and Votaries of Religion to their Interest, at so cheap a rate; by those very temporal Advantages that *were once*, and ought to be *still* the Rewards of a more bright and eminent *Piety*: When the holding out a *rich Promotion* shall make the *Priest* turn *Apostate*, and *revolt* from his former Integrity, and come basely to sneak and creep to the *un-righteous* Hand, that is able to advance him, to the great Prejudice, we are sure, of Religion and the Church; *this* is a Sight so abominable before *God and the Blessed Angels and good Men*, and so highly grateful to the grand *Enemy of Truth and Holiness*, that *Hell* with all its Eyes would open to behold it, and *bless* the Day, wherein it should see its own main Interest thrive so, and prosper on the Earth, and its chiefest Work done, and the Expences paid for it out of the Treasures and Revenues of the *Church* it self, so unhappily betray'd! But I am willing to *make haste* from so *ungrateful* a Reflection, and to *hope*, that not *one* of those, that hear me *this* Day, will ever consent to such an Instance of *execrable* Baseness, and thereby derive so foul a *Stain* and blot upon *God's* Honour, and their own Order and Innocence for ever!

That



SERM. XVI

Heb. 6. 5.

2 Cor. 4. 18.

That we may all be the more secure from the very Borders of such impious and dishonourable Compliances, we should carry a strict and jealous Eye upon our own Tempers and Inclinations, we should be careful to observe and regulate the main *Springs* and *Principles* of Action within us, our *Fears* and our *Desires*, the very *Hinges* upon which all our Motions *turn*. These we should endeavour to preserve under the Government and Awe of *religious Principles*, and within the reach and Influence of the *Powers of the world to come*: And then we shall come to move and act above the Sphere of any base earthly Attraction, and steer our Motions by a Compass more steady than any *this World* can supply us with; with a fix'd Eye and Regard to those infinitely brighter Views of Honour and Happiness *hereafter*; which will make us look down upon, and despise these earthly things, as too mean for our Ambition, and not worthy our Pursuit. *For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen (unless with the Eye of Faith alone) are eternal.*

'Tis to *this* Perfection that every one of our *sacred Function* is bound, and professes himself continually to aspire; and which 'till he has in some competent Measure attain'd, he will never be so secure, as he ought to be, from the *Prevalence* of those Temptations that are so peculiar to his *Order*, and so powerful to disturb or pervert the *faithful Execution* of his *Office*: Which brings me,

*Thirdly*, To lay before you somewhat a more particular Account and Description of those

those irregular Motives, and Methods of declining from the Duties of our Profession, which the Apostle here taxes under the infamous Character of *hidden things of dishonesty*: such base Principles and Proposals, as cannot bear a just Reproach of being in the *Light*, and therefore very conveniently shelter and hide themselves under the vain Protection of Disguise and false Pretences, by which Men are tempted to Prevaricate in their Sacred Office, and are fain to make use of Artifice, and Craft, and Violence upon the Word of God it self, to screen themselves, and escape from the Shame and Apprehensions of the World. All which, both Principles and Practices, the Holy Apostle assures us, 'twas his great Concern, and Conscience to avoid: *But have renounc'd the hidden things of dishonesty, nor walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully.*

The Apostle does very justly, and with a great deal of Elegance, censure these III Principles, under the reproachful Character of *hidden things of Dishonesty*: Dishonest they are in their very Form and Constitution, and since they are so, 'tis very fit they should be *hidden*. For so far common Sense directs us in the things of *Nature*, that what is indecent or offensive, be conceal'd; And 'tis the very same in *Morality* and *Conscience*, which, at least, appears desirous to *glaze* over, and disguise, what 'tis affectionately willing to *retain*, when it knows it not to be so exactly agreeable to the Rules of *Reason* and *Religion*.

For there is so much *Deformity* in irregular Designs, and sinful Purposes, that a Man would be out of *Countenance* with himself, as well

SERM. XVI. well as in *Disgrace* with the World, if he should always vouch and assert his real Intentions under the true Drift and Aim, by which they are carried; And therefore, in such a case, the Man seeks about for the *thin covering* of some lawful Pretence or other, whereby to impose a little upon his own Thoughts, that he may be the more *ease* to himself, and at the same time lie *conceal'd*, and out of the way from the View and Reflections of other Men.

Thus, we have known *Pride*, and *Singularity*, and *Fondness* for new Opinions of a Man's own, in matters of *Religion*, pass it self upon the World, and perhaps upon the Man himself at last; for *that* is possible, under the popular disguise of a generous Concern for the promoting of *Truth*, and delivering Mankind from under the Danger and Slavery of Old Prejudices in points of *Faith*. And this we find at present made a Pretence by *one* of our own Order, so full only of *himself*, for disturbing the long since establish'd Doctrines of *Religion*, and the Peace of the *Christian Church*, by returning us back into the Tumults and Confusion of ancient *Heresy*; which has, so many hundred Years since, receiv'd its Condemnation by the clear Light and Convictions of *Holy Scripture*, as the Modern *Re-vivers* of it ought to do by the severe Censures of the *Church* and *Law*. So strong a Byass is the *Conceit* of a Man's own Understanding upon him, to pervert the Word of God, in favour of his own *fond* Opinions!

But *this* is not the *only* Principle of Perverseness, the Gratification of a Man's *Pride* of his

OWN



own Knowledge and Conceits, that thus **SERM. XVI**  
 gives a violent Wrest; and Turn to his Mind, from the Truths of *Religion*. But when a Man comes to set his Heart too much upon Temporal Interest, and resolves to have his Share in the Happiness of this Life, when the favour of the Times comes to run in Countenance of False Principles, whether in *Religion*, or *Politicks*; 'tis this Man's *Wisdom* then to sink his Doctrine to a just Level with the Theam of popular Opinion, and to the Pleasure of those, whose Favour he seeks, and upon whose Interest he's willing to depend. A famous Instance of Spiritual Craft, in perverting the *Word of God* for this Reason, as we may in Charity believe, we find in the *Author* of a late piece of *Politick Sophistry*; where to serve a violent Turn of Government, St. Paul and his Doctrine are forc'd from their *natural sense*, and brought in to Teach and Patronize *Rebellion*: And such a Scheme of Government erected, where God Almighty and his Providence are entirely left out; and Men put under a very safe Condition without his Assistance of defending themselves when there shall be Occasion, by resisting their *Supreme Governours*, as the *Apostles* and we say, his own immediate Ordinance; but these Men deny it!

Rom. 13. 1, 2,  
3, 4.

How expedient such a Corruption of God's Word may be to the End, for which it was intended by this *Author*, I will not here meddle to determine; But this is certain, that no Revolution in State can make it necessary to change the word of God; and let it be as glorious as it will, is very much to be suspected, when

SER. M. XVI. when it shall be thought to stand in need of  
 such *violent* Methods to defend it.

But thus it happens, when Men have a strong set *Resolution* to excuse, or justify former Declensions from the Rules of *Religion* and *Right*, in publick Management, for base, unworthy Ends of their own private Interest; 'tis but then coining a sufficient number of *reserv'd* and *excepted Cases*, and *Distinctions* that would be found out in time, and such like diminishing Artifices, and they will presently bring down, and sink away a full, absolute, peremptory Command and *Law* of *Christ*, into a mere, thin, hungry, prudential Admonition, that Men shall be oblig'd to obey in *some Cases* only, and under *some* certain Circumstances; that is, when they have a *mind* to it, and have no longer Temptation nor Interest to the contrary.

Again, When a *Great* and *Powerful* Sinner has a mind to lie secure and lull'd in the Enjoyment of his Lusts, and yet would seem to be Religious, 'tis but applying to one of these *Reconcilers of Breaches*, these *Healers of Consciences*; and he, by concealing, or reserving some Parts of the Truth; and by perverting others, shall immediately furnish out a Religion, exactly to the Interest and Pleasure of his *great Patron*; and as agreeable to the word of *God*, in the mean time, as the *Teacher's* own *Faith* and *Practice* are.

The late *Modesty* of some worthy Patriots, who would pretend to determine the *Clergy* of the *Church* of *England* what Subjects they were to Preach upon, (I suppose none of those that should touch upon their own Vices) could

not

not have done the *Business* of Religion more effectually, than these Men do it for themselves; who, by false Applications to the Consciences of Men, and by *speaking peace to them* upon Grounds of Security, which the word of God knows nothing of, quite pervert the Design of *Christianity*, and disappoint the blessed End and Effect which it ought to have, and which *Almighty* God himself so heartily desires it should have, the *Reformation* and *Salvation* of sinful Men.

I shall give but *one* deplorable Instance of this, equivalent to a *thousand*. I mean that *Wicked Infinnation*, that after a Life of the greatest Prophaneness, Injustice and Debauchery, “yet a Man of fine Parts, and a well-  
“*turn’d* Understanding, upon his Death-bed  
“cannot so easily miscarry; he will come one  
“time or other, it seems, before he Dies,  
“to understand the true Worth and Value  
“of his Soul: If this be not to *walk in craftiness*, and to *handle the word of God deceitfully*, then, what is so? If to change the *Terms* of *Salvation*, which *Christ* himself deliver’d, is to pervert the *word of God*, then *this is such*. If *this* be not to betray the Interest of Men’s Souls for *Gain*, and to compliment the *Dying Sinner* into his *Eternal* Ruin, in order to procure the Temporal Favour and Preferments of the *Living*, then surely there is no such Practice in the World.

In the mean time, what a Whisper and ill Report will go through the Region of *departed Spirits*, when, after all, they shall find themselves in the midst of Torments, against the *Man* and his *Doctrine*, that to give them a  
little



SERMON XVI. little present, false, wretched, ease of Conscience, shall have thus deluded them for ever!

I am sure, it highly concerns the Author of this fatal and dangerous Suggestion, to repent him severely of the wickedness of his thought, and to take timely Care to prevent the horrid Influence of it, lest what was spoken by the Holy Prophet *Isaiah* upon another Occasion, be verified of him at last: *Hell from beneath is mov'd for thee, to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the Dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth: all they shall speak, and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak, and Miserable, as we are? art thou become like unto us?* "After all thy boasted Parts and Learning, art thou thus venerably descended, with all thy Wisdom and Gravity, to share with us in this Place, this House of Woe and Pain: Which we thought, instructed by thy Doctrine, to have been the Portion only of Ignorant and Foolish Souls! And how this Man will then be able to answer this Dismal Expostulation, he were best look to it himself, whilst there is time and room for his Repentance!

It is now time for me to draw towards a Conclusion of this long Discourse, and to proceed to shew in the

Fourth and last Place, that a steady, resolv'd, uniform Maintenance of the Rules and Principles of Christianity by the Ministers of it, is the only true Way, at last, to consult their own Honour and Reputation, and that of the Religion they profess. By manifestation of

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of the Truth, commending our selves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. SERM. XVI.

Not that the *Apostle* could ever suppose, that we should always actually procure the Favour, or receive the outward Approbation of Men, for justly executing our *Ministry*, which sometimes might prove an Argument for their Displeasure or Dislike against us; when we should by this very means oppose their ill Designs, controll their Practice, and contradict their Principles; which haughty and powerful Sinners, we know, can never bear. But thus far we are bound to do, and may commend our selves to the Consciences of the worst, and greatest Men, upon all Occasions, we may and ought to speak the great Truths of Religion so impartially before them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, *Ezek. 2. 5.* for they are sometimes most rebellious; We may deal so frankly and openly with them, in rebuking their Sins, and laying down the Duties of Religion so plainly before their Eyes, that we may dare appeal to their Consciences, if they will but think at all, and force them, in their own Convictions, to give their Opinion on the side of our Integrity; Tho' perhaps they may, at the same time, by a wicked Violence conceal their real Sentiments, and turn an outward Face of Frowns and Displeasure against our Persons and Interest.

So that what was here primarily intended by the *Apostle*, by commending our selves to the Consciences of Men, is only this, that we give Men all the just Reason in the World, by our open, undissembled Dealing, in the Work of our *Ministry*, to approve us; whether

SERM. XVI. *ther they will, or not, is not in our Power, and therefore can be no part of our Duty, nor ought to be any Reason of our Concern, but only in Charity for their sake.*

Much less are we to understand by this *commending our selves to mens consciences*, in this fair, unreserv'd Procedure in our *Ministerial Office*; that we shall always recommend our selves to their *Favour and Preferences*. A *faithful, resolute Discharge* of our *Duty* is not always the *readiest* way to the Procurement of these things. With *some Men 'tis a Diservice* to a Man's Character, that he has been *too Honest*.

But none of *these* things ought to move us, nor ought any of *these* Considerations to be regarded by us, in competition with doing our *Duty*, and fulfilling *the ministry which we have receiv'd of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God*. For as these Temporal Interests *ought* not to have been in our first Proposals, so if we go without them at last, it should be none of our Disappointment. This we may be sure of, that if God has any thing for Men to do in the Service of his *Church*, he is able to raise them in his own good time, and by his own Methods; And if he has not, there is no Reason we should desire our Advancement, it may prove a *Snares* to us, an In-*cumbrance* either of our *Honesty*, or our *Happiness*.

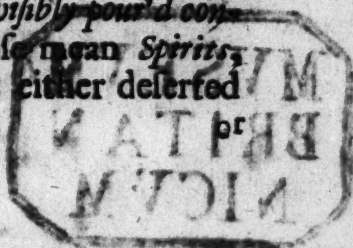
However these outward things may go with us, if, in the mean time, by our Steadiness and Constancy in maintaining the Principles of *Religion*, we have been so Happy as to have secur'd the Honour and Reputation of it in the World; If we have given all the Con-  
victions



victions possible of our own Sincerity in the SERM. XVI.  
 Belief of it, and that we our selves, who may  
 be justly presum'd best skill'd in the *Mysteries*,  
 are most heartily affected to the *beauty* of *Holiness*;  
 Why, then we may rest our selves contented  
 and satisfied with the blessed Applause,  
 and Approbations of a *good Mind* and Conscience,  
 without depending on the Frowns  
 or Favour of Men.

But, *Blessed be God*, this is not all that he  
 has given us for our Comfort at this time!  
 We now live to see those *Sacred Truths*, that  
 were, not so long since, the *Sport* and *Ridicule*  
 of *Impious, Insolent Men*, maintain a far better  
 Reputation in the World than *themselves*  
 with all their *Management*! *Truths*, that had  
 once the united Interest of Hypocrisie, Atheism,  
 Prophaneness, and Faction combin'd  
 against them, now *Triumphing* in the good Opinions  
 of Men, above all the Power of the Enemy,  
 above all the dark Policy, and malicious Contrivance  
 of the *Kingdom of Darkness* to suppress them!  
*Is not this the Lord's doing?* *psal. 118. 23.*  
 and should it not be *wonderful in our Eyes*!  
 From hence we may learn the strange Power  
 of oppress'd *Truth*, when assisted by God's  
 Blessing and Heavenly Influence! How, from  
 under all the Violence and Reproach thrown  
 upon it, 'tis able by a *Native Spring* within  
 it to return, and recover it self, and bear  
 down all *Opposition* that shall tend to overthrow it!

And as *God* has thus made *bare his Arm*,  
 and done Honour to his Holy Cause; so, on  
 the other side, has he not as *visibly pour'd con-*  
*tempt* upon the Head of all those *mean Spirits*,  
 especially of his Ministry, that either deserted



SERM. XVI. or betray'd his *Truth* in times of *Danger*? Be-  
 cause they *rejected the word of the Lord*, there-  
 fore he has *rejected them, and has made them*  
*contemptible and base before all the People, ac-*  
*ording as they have not kept his ways, but have*  
*been partial in the Law*; which latter Words  
 were a severe Threat denounc'd by the Prophet  
 Malac. 2. 9. *Malachi* against the Corruption of the Priest-  
 hood in his Days; and we are heartily trou-  
 bled we have had Reason to see them so tho-  
 roughly verifi'd in ours.

But let us not again renew our Breaches,  
 but endeavour to heal them: To this End,  
 Jer. 15. 19. in the Language of the Holy Prophet, let them  
 return to us, for we must not go to them: Let  
 them see and be convinc'd, that the venturing  
 and exposing our utmost Safety, for the Cause  
 of God and his Honour, whenever the State of  
 things requires it, is not only the noblest Sa-  
 crifice we can offer to God, the bravest Instance  
 of our Duty, but the most direct Means to se-  
 cure the Interests of Religion it self, and our  
 own lasting Honour together with it: Which  
 God, in his great Mercy to his Church and  
 People, grant that we may always continue  
 to deserve, tho' we may not always meet with  
 it, at the Hands of Men. But that we may  
 the better do so, Let thy Priests be clothed  
 with Righteousness, O God, so shall thy Saints  
 sing with Joyfulness.

To which ever-blessed God, Father, Son and  
 Holy Ghost, be ascribed all Praise, Honour,  
 Glory, and Power, throughout all the Churches  
 of the Saints, now, and World without end, Amen.



I N I S.



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